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on
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Robert W. Tucker

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Michael Portillo

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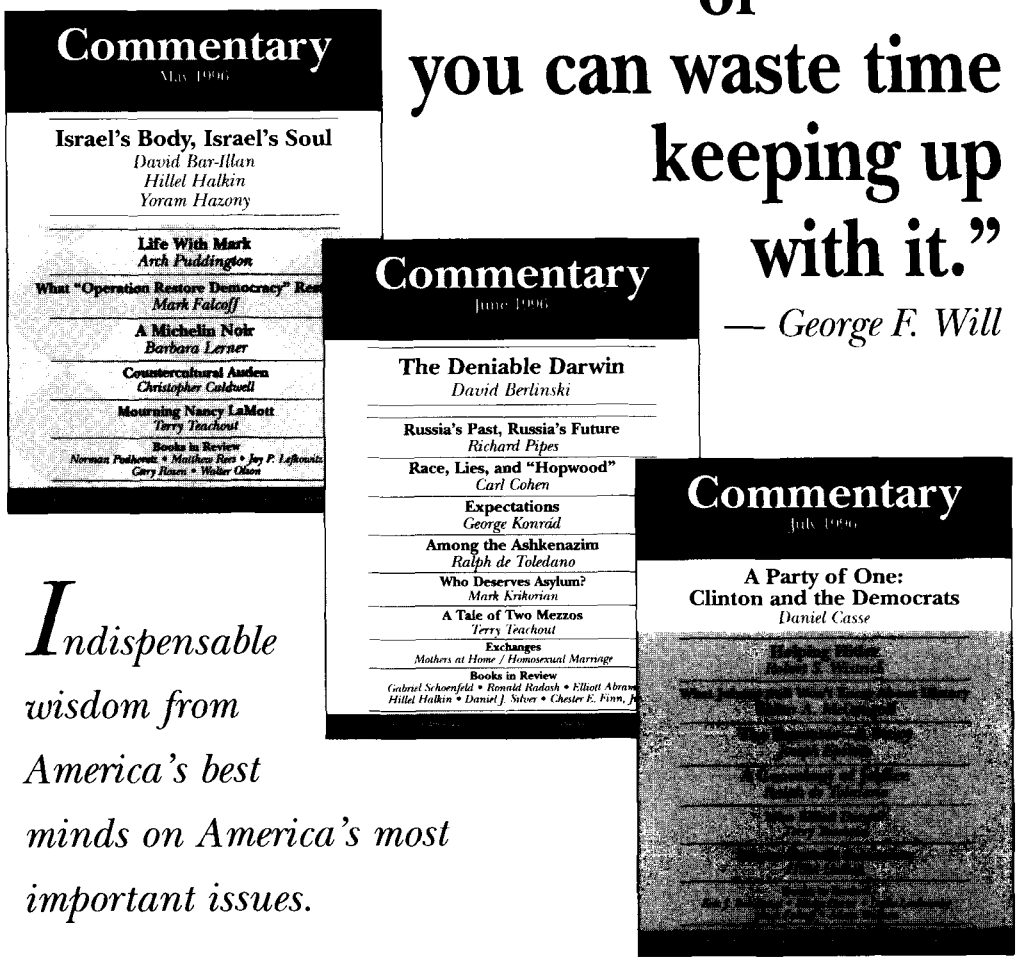

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Contents

ARTICLES

An Inner Circle of One
Robert W. Tucker 3

Europe on the Brink
Michael Portillo 27

The Logic of Covert Action
Bruce Berkowitz and Allan Goodman 38

Running Out of Gas
C.J. Campbell 47

Hayek's Slippery Slope
Neil McInnes 56

Proliferation:

Faking It and Making It
Henry Sokolski 67

Rethinking N + 1
Brad Roberts 75

Pollution
Humphrey Taylor 81

The Khatemi Factor
Mark N. Katz 85

Korea: A Time to be Bold?
Michael J. Mazarr 91

Conrad's *Nostromo* and the Third World
Robert D. Kaplan 98

BOOKS

Enough Blame to Go Round
Eliot Cohen 103

A Hedgehog After All
Adam Wolfson 109

Our Man in Nairobi
Michael Chege 113

CORRESPONDENCE

George F. Kennan, Conrad Black, Walter Berns, Mark Heller, James Pettifer 118

QUARTERLY

Reflections of a Repentant Sinner
Robert W. Tucker 125

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An Inner Circle of One

Woodrow Wilson and His Advisers

Robert W. Tucker

THE PERIOD OF American neutrality in the first World War will always fascinate those interested in the nation's encounter with the world. The years 1914-17 mark the great rite of passage for the United States to a continent it had before avoided. It was a rite that would have to be repeated a generation later. Yet once undergone, however abortively, America's role in the world would never again be quite the same. A past abandoned is never fully recovered.

The war that burst on an astonished world in August 1914 was the first general European conflict in a century. In the wars of the French Revolution and Napoleon (1792-1815), a young America had sought to preserve its neutrality while insisting on its rights to trade with the belligerents. Based on the assumption that the advantages of trade with America would force the belligerents to concede to America's demands as a neutral, Thomas Jefferson saw in "peaceable coercion" an effective substitute for war. But events proved Jefferson wrong: America could not escape the travails of a weak neutral state attempting to preserve its commerce amid a hegemonic struggle of great powers.

The European conflict that began a century later raised very much the same stakes as had the Napoleonic Wars. Once again, the conflict turned on the European balance of power, and once again the United States sought to remain outside the war while continuing to trade with the belligerents. In the intervening century, however, a great change had occurred: Whereas Jefferson had only dreamed of the day when America might "shake a rod over the heads of all", Woodrow Wilson could be excused for believing that day had come. In 1914 America had a population of over ninety million people. Its economy was almost twice that of its nearest competitor, Germany, and its rate of growth assured the nation's global economic primacy long into the future.

By these standards, America was not only a great power; it was the world's greatest power. But the resources of a state did not of themselves determine a nation's status. In the then European-dominated state system, the critical test of power was the efficiency and determination with which a state's resources could be mobilized for war. The European great powers, A.J.P. Taylor once observed, "were organizations for war. They might have other objects . . . but the basic test for them as

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Robert W. Tucker is professor emeritus of The Johns Hopkins University.

The principal sources for this essay are: *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, edited by Arthur S. Link (Princeton, 1966-1994), 69 volumes; Edward M. House Diary and Papers, Yale University Library; Diary and Papers of Robert Lansing, Library of Congress; Department of State, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States; *The Lansing Papers, 1914-1920* (Washington, 1940), 2 volumes. All pictures courtesy of the Woodrow Wilson House, Washington, DC.

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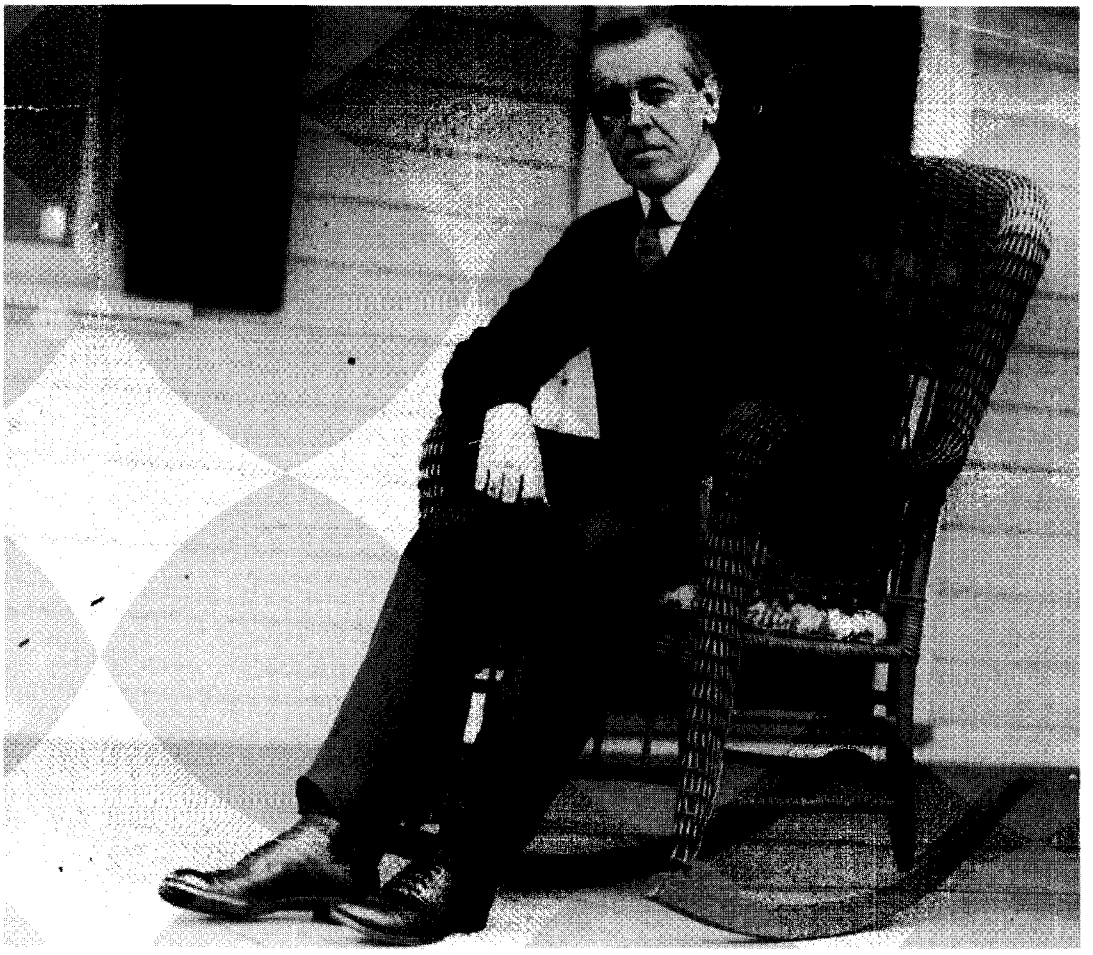
Great Powers was their ability to wage war." In 1914 the United States had yet to be seriously tested. The 1898 war against Spain could scarcely be considered a serious test. Since that time, the country had neither undergone a meaningful trial by arms nor shown any desire to do so. When war broke out in 1914, it had a military establishment smaller even than that maintained by a European power of second rank. This modesty corresponded to the disposition of the nation's government and people. A deep reluctance to bear that most demanding of collective sacrifices—war—had always been a characteristic of the world's newest nation.

These considerations notwithstanding, the importance of America in affecting the course and outcome of the war was apparent from the outset. Even assuming, as most did, that the United States remained a non-participant in the struggle, the character of its neutrality was seen as critical, particularly by the Allies. In undertaking the blockade of Germany, British statesmen were keenly aware of the significance of the American reaction. The great object of diplomacy, British Foreign Secretary Edward Grey stated in his memoirs, "was to secure the maximum of blockade that could be enforced without a rupture with the United States." An effective blockade of Germany might not guarantee an Allied victory but it would make a German triumph very difficult. In turn, the blockade's effectiveness depended, the submarine apart, on the American government's reaction to it.

Despite its neutral status, then, America was the holder of the balance of power in the world conflict from the outset. The individual



At the beginning: Wilson at the time of his nomination in 1912.

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holder of that balance was the President, Woodrow Wilson. He was so not only by virtue of the power over foreign policy a President possesses in the American constitutional system, but also because Wilson believed in that power to a greater degree than did most of his predecessors. The President's power over the initiation and conduct of foreign policy, he had written some years before becoming President, was "very absolute." Although the President cannot conclude treaties without the Senate's consent, "he may guide every step of diplomacy. . . . He need disclose no step of negotiation until it is complete and when it is completed . . . whatever its inclination, the Senate may feel itself committed also."

On becoming President, Wilson put this view into practice, as was soon apparent in his conduct of Mexican diplomacy. In his determination to remove a resistant Victoriano Huerta from office, Wilson intervened militarily at Vera Cruz. Only when war threatened between Mexico and the United States did a shaken President seek to enlist the support of a Congress that had been kept largely ignorant of his diplomacy. Although quickly given by the House, the resolution of support asked by the President was approved by the Senate only after a debate marked by dissatisfaction over the position in which Wilson's actions had put that body.

Mexico was indicative of a pattern of action Wilson would follow throughout his presidency. In the great battle over the Versailles peace treaty in 1919, it would lead to disaster for him. In the years between, it would often result in a relationship with Congress that was more difficult than it need have been. Nearly all Presidents have kept Congress in the dark about their diplomacy, but Wilson was more secretive than most. If he saw little reason to defer to the Congress on matters of foreign policy, this simply reflected his settled belief that the legislature had no real role here, the power of the Senate over treaty making apart. Ironically, that limited power proved sufficient in the end to destroy the capstone of Wilson's policy.

But the final lost battle with the Senate over the peace treaty was preceded by years of victories. In the 1914-17 period of neutrality, Wilson generally had his way with Congress in foreign policy. An important reason for his almost unparalleled dominance was the remarkable affinity between the President's outlook and that of the public. Wilson's neutrality policy enjoyed widespread support because his own waverings and uncertainties reflected those of the American people. Even his opponents acknowledged this. No other public figure at the time more faithfully mirrored the nation's mood, none more completely voiced the nation's hopes and fears, than did the President. Oddly enough, given his deeply held conviction that the popular mind was in conformity with his own, Wilson sometimes seemed unaware that in characterizing the former he was also depicting the latter. During the *Lusitania* crisis in the summer of 1915, a wavering President wrote to his secretary of state:

> Two things are plain to me, in themselves inconsistent, viz. That our people want this thing [*Lusitania* sinking] handled in a way that will bring about a definite settlement without endless correspondence, and that they will also expect us not to hasten an issue or so conduct the correspondence as to make an unfriendly issue inevitable.

This was indeed the prevailing public outlook; it wanted to uphold the nation's rights *and* to stay out of the war. It was Woodrow Wilson's outlook as well.

The striking affinity between Wilson and the public meant that where the public was either uncertain or deeply divided in its certainty, Wilson had a decisive influence. He was, in Patrick Devlin's words, "not only the President: he was the casting vote of the nation." At home as well as abroad, then, he held the balance of power over the issues of war and peace. The crucial decisions were his alone to make for his was the only voice the nation as a whole listened to during the years

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of neutrality. In reaching these decisions, Wilson kept a position of virtual isolation as few presidents have. It was a position he seemed almost to celebrate. There is an address on Abraham Lincoln that Wilson gave in September 1916 in which he commented on Lincoln's isolation in terms that reflected an affinity he must have felt:

> I nowhere get the impression in any narrative or reminiscence [of Lincoln] that the writer had in fact penetrated to the heart of his mystery, or that any man could penetrate to the heart of it. That brooding spirit had no real familiars. I get the impression that it never spoke out in complete self-revelation, and that it could not reveal itself completely to anyone. It was a very lonely spirit that looked out from underneath those shaggy brows and comprehended men without fully communing with them, as if, in spite of all its genial efforts at comradeship, it dwelt apart, saw its visions of duty where no man looked on. There is a very holy and very terrible isolation for the conscience of every man who seeks to read the destiny in affairs for others as well as for himself, for a nation as well as for individuals. That privacy no man can intrude upon. That lonely search of the spirit for the right perhaps no man can assist.

The "holy and terrible isolation" that Wilson saw in Lincoln, and in himself, was dictated not only by the "lonely search of the spirit for the right" but also by character. Wilson's character was such that it could not have accommodated another strong figure able and willing to engage him on the great issues of war and peace. It could not do so for the reason that Wilson believed he found Lincoln unable to do so: the inescapable isolation of the prophet, of the "man who seeks to read the destiny in affairs for others as well as for himself." Prophetic visions are not achieved through bureaucratic routine. They are not achieved through committees. They are reached alone, in communion with the self. Once reached, they are not subject to analysis and criticism.

The crucial decisions Wilson made during the years of neutrality often seemed to partake of the prophetic vision. This is not to say that they were made without prior consultation with Wilson's small circle of advisers, though occasionally it came close to this. Nor is it to say that those advisers were without any influence at all. No man, not even the iron-willed prophet, is an island unto himself. It is to say that there were very strict limits to the give and take over policy that Wilson would tolerate from the few who did assist him. Colonel Edward M. House came the closest in testing these limits. But even the Colonel's willingness to engage the President on matters Wilson felt strongly about was never pushed very far, for fear of jeopardizing a unique position. Unlike Washington, Wilson would not have tolerated an Alexander Hamilton. Once, House records, he observed to Wilson that a mark of Washington's greatness was the role he allowed Hamilton to play in his administration. Wilson agreed and remarked that "he (Wilson) always sought advice." "I almost laughed at this statement", wrote the one man who did presume to advise Wilson, though usually only with due caution.

Wilson's unwillingness to seek advice, his disinclination to hear what was unwelcome to him, and, even more, his penchant for taking an immediate dislike of those who told him what he did not wish to hear, were traits recognized by all who served him. Unlike Jefferson, with whom he may in many respects be compared, Wilson did not have a Madison or Gallatin. Wilson's ambassador in London, Walter Page, an acute observer for all his pro-British bias, noted in the fall of 1916, on his first visit to America since the outbreak of the war, that Wilson "has no real companions. Nobody talks to him freely and frankly. I've never known quite such a condition in American life." What Page observed, others had seen as well. Wilson's isolation was indeed without parallel for an American President. Had the case been otherwise, had Wilson been disposed to treat with others on

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the basis of give and take, the outcome of this critical period in American, and in world, history might have been quite different.

THE CENTRALITY of Woodrow Wilson in the history of the First World War is a commonplace. The story of America's journey from neutrality to war to a failed peace is largely the story of his journey from neutrality to war to a failed peace. Winston Churchill memorialized for later generations Wilson's position in declaring that it was "upon the workings of this man's mind and spirit to the exclusion of almost every other factor" that the "history of the world depended, during the awful period of Armageddon." What Churchill wrote after the war was recognized even at the time: "What does Wilson think? What will the President do?" were questions asked repeatedly both at home and abroad during the years of neutrality. They were asked in May 1915 when a German submarine sank the Cunard Liner *Lusitania* and 128 Americans perished, and they were asked in every subsequent crisis brought on by German acts at sea that were seen to violate America's neutral rights.

They are still asked today and not only because of the enormous power Wilson wielded, but because of the assumption that this period of history might have turned out differently; certainly, the small circle of assistants around Wilson thought so on more than one occasion. Despite the prevailing conviction in post-World War II historiography that Wilson's neutrality course could scarcely have been other than what it was, the continuing fascination with Wilson is difficult to account for without this assumption.

If the choices Wilson made were determinative, it is nevertheless the case that the "workings of this man's mind and spirit" remain in many respects as obscure today as they did to contemporaries who worked closely with him. There are significant limits to what we know about the inner man and the deeper springs of his actions. Wilson left no diary. Nor did he leave much in the way of private memoranda. The unpublished prolegomenon to a peace note, written at the end of November 1916, is a rare example to the contrary. Wilson's correspondence with the small circle around him dealing with foreign policy provides some insight, but often not enough for one to be confident of what it was that moved him to a given act or policy. Wilson seldom revealed himself to those who served him. On a number of occasions, it is true, he did so with House, but even then his intimacies had distinct limits. One of House's recurring complaints is that Wilson seldom told his closest counselor what he really thought and was going to do. House recorded in his diary that the President was consulting none of his immediate entourage during the *Sussex* crisis in April 1916, and those around Wilson are "as ignorant of his intentions as the man in the street." It was a familiar refrain in the critical months leading up to the decision to intervene in the war.

Occasionally, one may get an insight into Wilson's "mind and spirit" through the letters he wrote to friends, particularly to women friends. His letters in the fall and winter of 1914 to one of them reveal a man who remained terribly lonely and depressed following the death of his first wife, Ellen, in August 1914. "My own individual life has gone utterly to pieces. I do not care a fig for anything that affects me." His outlook was to change radically in the spring of 1915 after meeting Edith Galt, whom he was to marry in December of that year. But in the period from August 1914 to April 1915, American neutrality policy was set. Thereafter change would prove very difficult. In some measure, Wilson's letters in this period point to a President unable to give neutrality policy the clear and unremitting attention it warranted. Later, in August and September of 1915, his many love letters to Edith Galt show a Wilson who plainly dreads the prospect of war but who is unwilling to back away from a position that has brought him to its brink.

There are, of course, Wilson's public addresses. A case may be made that Wilson

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revealed himself as much in his public utterances as he did privately. It may even be that he revealed himself more in speaking to the public. Wilson's early biographer, Ray Stannard Baker, a journalist who knew and admired the President, wrote that Wilson "could be more intimate and confidential with five thousand people than with one." With one or a few, Wilson was normally reserved to the point of diffidence. In addressing the public, however, Wilson seemed to be at ease and more forthcoming. No doubt this was due in part to the fact that, in an age that still placed a high value on oratory, Wilson was without peer as a public speaker among the public figures of his day. The stories are legion of how he moved audiences; he moved those who thought themselves sophisticated, and even those who heartily disliked him. Whether his words provided lasting instruction as well is another matter. Had they done so, the public would not have been as confused as it undoubtedly was in the end over the reasons for America's intervention in the war. Walter Lippmann, who went from skepticism to admiration to opposition, was on the mark when he wrote in his skeptical period of Wilson's oratory: "His mind is like a light which destroys the outlines of what it plays upon; there is much illumination, but you see very little." But even Lippmann was moved more than once by Wilson's words.

How much did Wilson reveal when he addressed the public? His adversaries regularly accused him of dissembling and never more so than over neutrality. But the charge is difficult to credit. That Wilson imputed an exaggerated sense of idealism to the nation, that he appealed to the vanity of the American people as few Presidents have done, and that he benefited politically from the flattering portrait he repeatedly drew, is certainly the case. Yet he did this with what almost seemed to be a transparent sincerity. Indeed, Wilson probably dissembled less when dealing directly with the public than did most political leaders of the period. Still, his public candor had its limits. Why he acted in many instances as he did must, in the end, remain little more than speculative. The record, written and spoken, takes the student only so far and it is often not nearly far enough. There is irony in this since Wilson appears to have been meticulous in keeping as much as possible of the written record of his presidency. Yet the man who saved nearly everything left of himself very little.

II

WILSON'S CHIEF foreign policy assistants made up a small circle. When the war broke out, it consisted of Colonel House, who held no official position, William Jennings Bryan, the secretary of state, and Robert Lansing, the counselor to the State Department and second in command to Bryan. Among the envoys to the principal European states, the most important was Walter Page, Wilson's ambassador to London. Apart from the departure of Bryan in June 1915, and the addition of Frank Polk, who took over the number two position in State after Lansing became secretary, the composition of the inner circle of advisers did not change during the period of neutrality.

A group that seldom numbered more than three or four, then, either saw or communicated with the President on a fairly frequent basis. In the White House there was no one who assisted Wilson on foreign policy, the staff consisting of the President's personal physician, Cary Grayson, a private secretary, Joseph Tumulty, along with two secretarial assistants and several persons who performed clerical functions. Grayson was close to Wilson, who treated him in many ways like the son he never had, but he played no role in affairs of state. Tumulty, on the other hand, did occasionally intrude into the realm of foreign policy, particularly when diplomatic issues had a strong impact on domestic politics, for, in addition to controlling access to the President, he was Wilson's principal link with Congress and the press. He informed the President, often gratuitously, of the state of

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public opinion. And he was in constant touch with officials in the party. As might be expected, Tumulty's "advice" on foreign policy was generally conditioned by his reading of the political scene at home. Though an important member of the President's entourage, he was in no real sense concerned with diplomatic affairs. By present day standards, Wilson had no staff that dealt on a continuing basis with foreign policy. Nor was the absence of a White House staff compensated by the State Department, then a modest establishment befitting a second or third-rate power.

While Wilson inherited an inadequate foreign policy establishment, it is doubtful whether he would have made effective use of a better one. He made little use of the resources the State Department did have to offer. During the period of neutrality, he took virtually no steps to create a more adequate mechanism for the conduct of foreign policy. At the outset of the war, Lansing constituted a joint State and Navy Neutrality Board to deal with the technical issues of neutrality. For the rest, almost nothing was done. The President sought no advisory body that could help him on substantive issues of policy for the simple reason that he would have had little use for such a body, just as he had little use for the body he did have—his cabinet. Wilson usually worked alone. In a great crisis his need for isolation became all the more pronounced. What was necessary, and sufficient, was that he think through the issue and satisfy himself that the right solution had been reached. He might seek the advice, more often really the support, of House, but in the closing months of the neutrality period, he even appeared to rely less on that. In undertaking his peace initiative of December 1916, he acted quite alone. So, too, in finally deciding on intervention in late February and early March 1917.

If Wilson worked largely alone, he nevertheless could not do without some assistance. Since he often did not clearly grasp the legal issues of neutrality, he had need to call upon Lansing and the State Department's legal experts. Since he was disinclined to treat directly with the representatives of the belligerent states, and only rarely did so, yet was also loath to use normal diplomatic channels for his most important initiatives, he had need of a trusted agent. House was that agent. And, of course, House was also the person with whom he could, when so disposed, exchange views and from whom he sought sympathy and reassurance in his otherwise lonely position.

House apart, Wilson was seldom content with his small circle of assistants. Not long after the war began, he complained to House that Bryan was unsuitable for the office of secretary of state, though he did not know what could be done about it. Perhaps Bryan would resign because of some policy disagreement. Bryan was eventually to do so in June 1915, but his successor, Lansing, scarcely proved more satisfactory to Wilson. The President's ambassadors were equally unsatisfactory to him. Page in London was increasingly a source of irritation and frustration because of his strong identification with the Allied cause and because he openly voiced disagreement with Wilson's neutrality policy. By the summer of 1916, the President refused even to read his ambassador's letters, relegating the unwelcome task to his wife. Wilson's unhappiness with Page was exceeded only by his impatience in dealing with his ambassador in Berlin, James Gerard, whom he considered a complete incompetent. Whereas Wilson thought that Page was unwilling to represent him, Gerard he judged incapable of doing so.

Only House seemed to remain above criticism. But even in his case, there are signs that by the spring of 1916, Wilson's confidence in the judgment of his "dearest friend", as he addressed House in letters, had begun to wane. In drafting his peace note of December, Wilson proceeded without the Colonel. In his letters, "dearest friend" became "dear House."

THE SINGULARITY of Wilson's experience with his advisers is striking. In the case of perhaps no other President in the nation's history can there be found a real parallel. Even so, was Wilson justified in

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the judgments he passed on his advisers? The answer seems clearest in the case of Bryan. Bryan was entirely unsuitable as secretary of state. Political necessity had led to his appointment. He had no qualifications for the position. As secretary he was often an embarrassment to Wilson, given his startling ignorance of diplomatic issues and his insistence upon continuing to give public lectures for pay. The press made Bryan an object of ridicule as did the Washington political community. Wilson, though defending Bryan in the beginning, finally came to agree with those wishing for his resignation. He did so, however, only after the war had begun. Prior to the war he and Bryan had had no serious disagreements over policy and, indeed, had worked together rather well. Bryan's idealism appealed to Wilson. As idealists they were quite close. It was as practical men who had to come to terms with the world as it was, rather than as it ought to have been, that they differed greatly. At least so thought Wilson. Bryan was an idealist, absolutely sincere but utterly naive. This was presumably what made him dangerous in the end. By contrast, Wilson, as he thought of himself and as his admirers then and later have thought of him, was the exemplary practical idealist.

With Bryan, on the day of his acceptance of the office of secretary of state, December 1912.

Yet the contrast did not seem too glaring or burdensome to Wilson before the outbreak of the war. It was the travail of neutrality that brought the differences between the two men to the surface. Bryan's great object, one to which he was ready to subordinate all else, was to remain out of the war. "He suffers from a singular sort of moral blindness", Wilson wrote to Edith Galt shortly after Bryan's resignation in June 1915, "and is as passionate in error as in the right courses he has taken." Wilson meant that Bryan's great overriding concern was to stay out of the war, and that to secure this end he was ready to sacrifice neutral rights. It was true.

At the same time, it was also true that Bryan advocated positions that Wilson was subsequently to take. It was Bryan who urged mediation on the President at the outset of the war and, in

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doing so, articulated the idea of a peace without victory. It was Bryan as well who urged a course upon the President in the first year of the war that was essentially the course Wilson was to follow in his peace initiative of December 1916. Bryan's abortive efforts to find a modus vivendi in the belligerents' conduct of the war at sea, one that would obviate the threat to American neutrality held out by the submarine, were ill-founded and clumsy. His occasional diplomatic indiscretions were damaging. Yet he saw almost from the start, as others did not, where the Wilson administration's initial response to Germany's war zone declaration of early February 1915 would ultimately lead. Bryan alone among Wilson's close advisers argued in the spring of 1915 that the administration's position, if persisted in, ran the strong risk of war with Germany, since it required, in effect, that Germany abandon its manner of conducting submarine warfare against Allied shipping. Unalterably opposed to a course that ran a strong risk of war with Germany, Bryan urged Wilson to refrain from demanding German observance of neutral claims—principally the claimed right of American citizens to travel in safety on Allied vessels—that were in any event a matter of uncertainty and dispute. In April and May of 1915, Bryan's position was rejected time after time by the President in favor of the hard line taken by Lansing. When the crisis brought on by the sinking of the *Lusitania* resulted in the American demand that Germany abandon the use of the submarine, Bryan, unwilling to go along, resigned.

If ever a cabinet resignation resulted from a difference in principle, and one that reflected the deepest convictions of the departing official, this was it. Bryan had not wanted to leave. Nor did he leave for the reason that Wilson had repeatedly rejected his advice in favor of his subordinates' counsel. Whatever his many faults and shortcomings, and some were monumental, Bryan was not a small man. Generous to a fault, he bore no resentment against the man who had successfully opposed his position before the President and who would succeed him. Bryan was always disposed to forgive and forget, always ready to give the other—whether friend or foe—his due. In these respects, as in so many others, he differed greatly from Wilson. Critics who decried Bryan's ignorance and his naivety nevertheless liked him in a way they did not and could not like Wilson. Bryan's resignation was transparently a matter of principle and conscience. If anyone could be expected to honor and appreciate that, it was Woodrow Wilson. Yet Wilson did not take the resignation well. To Edith Galt he wrote:

> The impression upon my mind of Mr. Bryan's retirement is a very painful one *now*. It is always painful to feel that any thinking man of disinterested motive, who has been your comrade and confidant, has turned away from you and set his hand against yours; and it is hard to be fair and not think that the motive is something sinister. . . . I have been deserted before. The wound does not heal, with me, but neither does it cripple.

Wilson wrote these words six months after he had told House he wanted Bryan out. He wrote them after months of repeatedly rejecting Bryan's counsel. Bryan had not been his confidant; House had been, as Bryan well knew and told Wilson upon resigning. Why Wilson could not simply acknowledge that Bryan's resignation was the result of an honest and serious difference is difficult to understand. Perhaps it only reflected Wilson's well-known trait of finding, in any and every conflict he had, unworthy motives on the part of his adversaries. Earlier that year, in his struggle with Congress over legislation to permit the establishment of a government-owned and operated merchant marine, Wilson had written to a friend, "you cannot know to what lengths men like Root and Lodge are going, who I once thought had consciences but now know have none." Bryan had a conscience, and a large one, which Wilson knew as well as anyone. Yet he found it hard to believe that Bryan's motive in resigning did not hide something sinister.

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WILSON HAD appointed Bryan out of necessity. His political debts to Bryan, Bryan's standing in the party, the need of party unity and Bryan's ardent wish to be secretary of state had led to his appointment. In Lansing's case, these considerations were absent—even desire, since Lansing had not thought himself a serious candidate for so high an office. Wilson had not wanted him at first but House, though he scarcely knew Lansing, had quietly urged his appointment. Aware that Wilson did not think Lansing "big enough" for the job, he wrote to the President that Lansing "could be used to better advantage than a stronger man." Lansing, the Colonel thought, would be "a man with not too many ideas of his own and one that will be entirely guided by you without unnecessary argument." In finally approving Lansing as secretary, Wilson agreed that he was "practically his own secretary of State and Lansing would not be troublesome by obtruding or injecting his own ideas." To both men, Lansing's appointment seemed convenient. House would get rid of his "Bryan problem" and no longer have to look over his shoulder when usurping the functions of the secretary of state. Wilson would get over his "Bryan problem" and no longer have to contend with a secretary who disagreed with his neutrality policy, and who retained a substantial political following.

To the outside world, Bryan's successor seemed to fulfill House's and Wilson's private expectations. Even within the Wilson cabinet, let alone the Washington community, Lansing was seen as little more than the President's obedient law clerk. The impression was deceiving. In public, and even in cabinet meetings, Lansing was generally quiet, reticent, even diffident. Yet he was also a man of strong convictions, as his confidential memoranda show. Foreign diplomats whom Lansing found guilty of some transgression could also attest to this. In appearance retiring, Lansing was in fact stubborn to the point of willfulness. Unlike the pragmatic and pliable House, once he had taken a position, it was seldom abandoned.

The widespread belief that despite his high position Lansing was unimportant arose in large part from his concentration on, some thought obsession with, legal issues. But Lansing's concerns went well beyond the narrowly legal, and to the extent they did focus on the legal, those were more important than was commonly perceived. Neutrality was, after all, a legal institution defined by certain rights and duties. A neutral's conflicts with belligerents, whatever the political interests at stake, had to be expressed in legal terms; that is, in the form of legal claims and counterclaims. A neutral government might contend, as the American government often did, that its honor and dignity were at stake in a dispute with a belligerent; even so, these interests were at stake because the neutral's rights had presumably been violated and the alleged transgressor had refused to make proper redress. In America's case, legal issues were particularly significant given the President's essential position throughout the period of neutrality. Wilson did not publicly speak of the nation's security during this period, at least not in a way that tied security to the course and outcome of the war. As time went by, he also refused to see any difference between the moral claims of the two sides. Humanitarian issues aside, this left our rights and duties as a neutral to contend over with the belligerents. Although the violation of rights was seen to raise larger issues of honor, dignity, and prestige, they did so only through the medium of the law.

In becoming secretary, Lansing thus had a built-in, though frequently overlooked, advantage. He had been counselor to the Department, and was acknowledged to be an expert on international law. While he did not enjoy the renown of his illustrious predecessor, John Bassett Moore, he had a solid reputation in the field. During the months following the outbreak of war, Lansing's advice on the legal issues of neutrality had often been critical. His elaborate defense of America's neutral position in late 1914 against charges of partiality toward the Allies pleased Wilson, as

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did the hard view he took at the outset toward German claims to establish extended war zones within which submarines might take reprisal measures against Allied shipping. In the period between the American response of February 10, 1915, to the German war zone declaration and the crisis that arose in May over the sinking of the *Lusitania*, Lansing's was the voice Wilson normally listened to for instruction on America's rights as a neutral. That voice found Germany's conduct of the war at sea to be not only wanton and indiscriminate, but a deliberate affront to the United States.

Nevertheless, in appointing Lansing as secretary of state, Wilson had chosen someone whose deeper views were opposed to his own. Although Wilson had approved of most of counselor Lansing's legal positions on America's neutral rights, he had not done so on the assumption that they would sooner or later lead to war with Germany. It was Bryan who had believed they would, not Wilson. What Wilson might have done had he realized that the course he was following would lead to intervention remains speculative; still, his subsequent behavior strongly suggests that he would have been far more hesitant to take positions from which retreat would later prove so difficult. Lansing was another matter. Persuaded that the defense of neutral rights was identical with the nation's honor and dignity, he had decided by the late spring of 1915 that American intervention on the Allied side would prove necessary should it once become apparent that Germany was gaining the upper hand in the struggle. "I have come to the conclusion", Lansing wrote in a private memorandum shortly after becoming secretary, "that the German Government is utterly hostile to all nations with democratic institutions because those who compose it see in democracy a menace to absolutism and the defeat of the German ambition for world domination." He believed that a German triumph would threaten democracy everywhere. Even a war that ended in a draw would vindicate the German cause by establishing Germany as the equal in power to the rest of Europe combined. The danger was great but the remedy was plain: "It is that

Robert Lansing

Germany must not be permitted to win this war and [*sic*] to break even, though to prevent it this country is forced to take an active part. This ultimate necessity must be constantly in our minds in all our controversies with the belligerents. American public opinion must be prepared for the time, which may come, when we cast aside our neutrality and become one of the champions of democracy."

These words summed up Lansing's credo with respect to the war, one that with the passage of time would be ever more tenaciously held. Wilson had chosen a determined interventionist as secretary of state. Lansing did not always act consistently with his stated convictions on the deeper significance of the war. He

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had, after all, a President whose views required a measure of dissimulation on the part of those who served him. As time went by and Wilson became more intent on remaining out of the conflict, this need for deception increased. A substantial degree of deception was, in any event, built into Lansing's position by virtue of his conviction that public opinion demanded an apparent impartiality in dealing with the belligerents.

An ingrained habit of seeing issues in legal terms also led to positions that at times appeared to contradict Lansing's commitment to the Allied cause. The secretary's pursuit of "cases", as Page contemptuously characterized Lansing's approach, was often directed against Allied transgressions of America's neutral rights, and were nearly as often presented in a heavy-handed way that ignored Allied sensibilities. House, though he more than once defended Lansing to Wilson, thought him lacking in tact. But it was more than that; Lansing seemed afflicted with a kind of schizophrenia, living in two worlds—the legal and the "other" world—simultaneously. His defense was that his duty did not permit him to overlook violations of the nation's rights, even though committed by the Allies, and that the public would not have sanctioned such a course. There was a good deal to be said for this defense. Even so, there are occasions that can scarcely be accommodated on these grounds and must be seen either as gratuitous or as attempts on Lansing's part to placate his all-powerful client.

Such lapses notwithstanding, Lansing's strong Allied sympathies were apparent, as were the pro-Allied policies he nearly always urged Wilson to follow. The war, he was persuaded, was a great struggle between freedom and absolutism, democracy and autocracy. In this struggle nothing must be spared to defeat the German drive for world empire. Lansing immediately feared German designs in Mexico, Haiti, Santo Domingo, and elsewhere in Latin America. But a German victory would have much broader consequences. A Germany that was not utterly defeated would soon seek to renew the struggle by allying its forces with the two empires, Russia and Japan, which were almost as hostile to democracy as Germany, and which also entertained ambitions of territorial expansion. These three empires "would constitute an almost irresistible coalition against the nations with republican and liberal monarchical institutions. It would be the old struggle of absolutism against democracy, an even greater struggle than the one now in progress." The success of such a coalition would mean a new division of the world and "the turning back of the hands of human progress two centuries." Lansing sketched out this dark vision of a future consequent upon a German victory, shortly after he became secretary of state in 1915. Written as a private memorandum, it demonstrated that, unlike Wilson, he did not look with dread upon America's intervention in the war; nor did he share the President's fears respecting the domestic consequences of intervention. Wilson had a profound psychological and spiritual need to find a special justification for going to war; Lansing had no comparable need. It was not that he somehow gloried in war but that he deeply believed in what he thought to be the threat held out by a German victory or, for that matter, a peace without victory.*

*A generation later, in the years immediately preceding World War II, Lansing's vision of 1915 seemed to many to have become the world's ever more likely fate. It was to escape this fate that America for a second time abandoned isolation, intervened in World War II, and in the years following the war pursued a policy of containment. Lansing's analysis thus appears to have foreshadowed much of the century's subsequent course, except that the great contingency he assumed would inaugurate this course, a German victory (or standoff), did not come to pass. Instead, what did come to pass, a German defeat, did not result in the lasting triumph of liberal-democracy but in the greatest threat yet posed to it. In some measure, this unexpected consequence must be seen as the result of casting the war in the absolute moral categories that Lansing did.

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Lansing's reputation has been that of a realist *par excellence*. One side of him was just that. But the other side was that of the ideologue, and it is this side that appears dominant. Considerations of power are never excluded; at the same time, they are subordinated to ideological considerations. In his desire to see Germany utterly beaten, there was no apparent concern on Lansing's part of the effect this might have on the future balance of power in Europe. He evidently believed that Europe's peace and security were dependent primarily on the kind of government the European states would have after the war, not upon the balance of power that would emerge. In a world made up of democratic states, the balance of power would be reduced to a minor role, since democracies were neither aggressive nor unjust. The essential of peace—permanent peace—was not that power should be balanced but that all nations should be politically liberalized.

Lansing was to make almost a litany of these themes. While House, too, emphasized democracy as an essential condition of a permanent peace, he was also sensitive to balance of power calculations. Page was closer to Lansing's position, though he saw the "war for democracy" theme almost entirely through the medium of Anglo-American partnership. That Wilson did not embrace Lansing's view was a matter of wonderment and anxiety to the secretary. "The amazing thing to me", Lansing noted in a September 1916 memorandum, "is that the President . . . does not seem to grasp the full significance of the war or the principles at issue. . . . That German imperialistic ambitions threaten free institutions everywhere apparently has not sunk very deeply into his mind. For six months I have talked about the struggle between Autocracy and Democracy, but do not see that I have made any great impression. However, I shall keep on talking."

Throughout 1916 Lansing did keep on talking, to Wilson's growing annoyance. The President was never as oblivious to the principle that preoccupied Lansing as the secretary believed. As early as December 1914, Wilson had privately expressed the view that even though responsibility for the war was not Germany's alone, one condition of the war's settlement was that "the Government of Germany must be profoundly changed." Whatever the precise meaning to be read into this statement, it evidently carried the implication that Germany's government was in some measure a cause of the war. If it did not go nearly as far as Lansing, this was because Wilson wanted above all else to remain out of the war. To a mind of Wilson's cast, this desire could only be jeopardized by accepting the categorical distinction Lansing drew between the two sides. If that distinction were once fully embraced, Wilson's view of the moral equality of the belligerents would collapse. But that would mean taking sides in moral terms. To Wilson, this step would undermine his entire position. Once Lansing's view of the war was accepted, how could the President act as impartial mediator? If the struggle was one between the forces of oppression and the forces of freedom, how could he champion a peace without victory? Indeed, if the moral judgment was the ultimate judgment, as Wilson believed, how could the abandonment of moral equivalence fail to result sooner or later in America's intervention?

If even House—more sensitive than Lansing—was puzzled by the reasons that bound Wilson to his stand on the moral equivalence of the belligerents, it is hardly surprising that Lansing was as well. As time went by, the secretary became an ever more ardent interventionist willing to pay any price to see Germany decisively beaten. He had none of Wilson's fears about the costs of war. On the eve of the nation's entrance in the war, Lansing wrote to himself: "Things have turned out right and the days of anxiety and uncertainty are over. . . . It may take two or three years. It may even take five years. It may cost a million Americans; it may cost five million. However long it may take, however many men it costs we must go through with it."

Nor did Lansing share Wilson's aspira-

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tion to reform international society by the inauguration of a new diplomacy. Despite his conviction that the great essential of permanent peace was the political liberalization of all nations, Lansing's view of diplomacy and of America's interests was thoroughly conservative and conventional. He was a nationalist in the American grain, quite content to retain the historic bases and interests of the nation's foreign policy. His devotion to international law and the strict observance of treaty commitments was not such as to stand in the way of interest. His commitment to the Monroe Doctrine, and accordingly to American predominance in the Western Hemisphere, was complete, though he was not opposed to Wilson's and House's modest efforts to multilateralize the Monroe Doctrine so long as its essential character remained unchanged. An acute sensitivity to what he perceived as any infringement on the nation's honor and dignity marked all of his actions. He, too, believed that America was the last and best hope of the world. Yet this belief did not lead Lansing, as it did Wilson, to dream of America serving as order-giver to the world. Lansing thought Wilson's "dream of possessing a beneficent domination over the nations, both belligerent and neutral, had become apparently the great underlying impulse to Mr. Wilson's future course of action", but that it was entirely futile.

Lansing's views went along with an increasingly possessive regard for his position. He believed *he* was secretary of state in fact as well as in form. His awe of the office and of his suddenly elevated position lasted only several weeks. Appointed in early July 1915, by late August he was intent on pursuing a course toward Germany that went further than Wilson intended. In the crisis that arose in late August over the German sinking of the British liner *Arabic*, in which two Americans perished, Lansing showed an independence that scarcely conformed to the picture of the obedient law clerk intimidated by his high office. Intent on forcing the German government to capitulate on the submarine issue, he informed the German ambassador that unless Berlin "frankly declared that there would be no more surprise attacks on vessels carrying passengers, and lived up to that declaration, the United States would certainly declare war on Germany." The warning—indeed, ultimatum—was given without the President's authorization. Its failure, as Lansing acknowledged in a private memorandum written two days earlier, might well have led to his disavowal by Wilson. Lansing had taken this course because he was convinced it was "the only way to avoid national humiliation." But, he added, "we cannot enter the war with the country divided as it is at present. So if my declaration is challenged I cannot make good."

As matters turned out, Lansing's bluff was not called. His good fortune was to have had a German ambassador, Count von Bernstorff, who proved to be very cooperative for the reason he was determined to avoid war with the United States. In this context, the significance of the episode is not to be found in the terms by which it was settled, but in Lansing's behavior. The *Arabic* crisis revealed a secretary of state with a propensity for sailing close to the wind and determined to pursue a course he considered required by the nation's interests, even if the President was not—or not yet—so persuaded. It foreshadowed a pattern that before the period of neutrality had come to an end would border on insubordination. Yet it seems that he did not see his acts for what they were. Even in the case of Wilson's peace initiative of December 1916, Lansing, both at the time and subsequently, refused to acknowledge that he had sought to undermine the President's chosen course, though any other interpretation of his behavior is difficult to credit. Perhaps he was sincere in this. If so, it was a sincerity based on the belief—an illusion, to be sure—that in acting independently he was doing what the President would have wanted done had the latter better understood the situation in which action was required.

If Lansing indeed thought he was only slightly ahead of the President when acting on his own, he was not entirely to blame. In the first eight months of the war, Wilson had

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given him no little encouragement for so thinking, having endorsed many of counselor Lansing's positions. Then, too, the *Arabic* and *Sussex* crises ended in victories for the United States, victories due in no small measure to positions an unyielding Lansing had urged. Wilson, though willing enough to accept these victories, was nevertheless left ever more uneasy by them, for he was now increasingly sensitive to the direction in which his neutrality course was taking him. That course allowed little latitude.

In this simple fact lay Lansing's principal advantage and chief strength. He had only to act on the logic that defined the nation's neutrality after the spring of 1915. It was Wilson who increasingly sought to escape from what had become for him a labyrinth affording no satisfactory way out. However he turned, he saw not only the belligerents but his secretary of state blocking the exits.

III

LANSING'S ROLE IN Wilson's diplomacy has generally been underestimated. By contrast, House's role, though considerable, has often been exaggerated. Certainly it was so at the time. The picture drawn of House by contemporaries was that of the publicly withdrawn but all-powerful friend and adviser whose dominant influence reached out in almost every direction. The press referred to him as The Silent Partner. House discouraged the attention given him for he sensed that, sooner or later, it must jeopardize his altogether distinctive standing with Wilson. Yet in the beginning, at least, the President seemed almost to encourage the popular impression of the Colonel's position. To a journalist who questioned whether House had faithfully represented him on a given matter, Wilson famously replied: "Mr. House is my second personality. He is my independent self. His thoughts and mine are one." No twentieth-century President has so equated his persona with that of an assistant, but then in the twentieth century there has been no relationship quite comparable to that between President Wilson and Colonel House.

A Texan who had served as adviser to several governors of that state, House had in time become a figure of some standing in the national Democratic Party. He first met Wilson in November 1911, at a time when the future President, then governor of New Jersey, was considering making a bid to be the Democratic Party's standard bearer in the 1912 presidential elections. The day following the meeting, House wrote to his brother-in-law: "He is not the biggest man I ever met, but he is one of the pleasantest and I would rather play with him than any prospective candidate I have seen." Having tired of Texas politics, House was looking for a larger stage to satisfy his ambition. Unable himself to play the part he aspired to, he had come to realize the necessity of doing so through someone who could. In Wilson he at once saw that he had "found both the man and the opportunity."

A close relationship between the two men soon formed, a relationship Wilson appears to have entered into as eagerly as did House. By the time Wilson had become the President-elect, a year later, House had become his principal assistant and trusted adviser. As such, the Colonel played an important part in helping Wilson fill the positions of his forthcoming administration. He took a hand in some of the diplomatic appointments. The ambassador to Great Britain, Walter Page, though a friend of Wilson's, was under a special obligation to House for his position. In time, House's role, as measured by those in his debt, would grow. When Bryan resigned, it was House who urged Lansing's appointment as secretary, something Lansing must have eventually learned (in all likelihood from House). Lansing's successor, Frank Polk, was also a House man. By late 1915, the upper reaches of the foreign policy establishment bore House's imprint.

House served Wilson in a variety of roles. Viewed from the vantage point of the late 1990s, he was the functional equivalent of both chief of staff and national security adviser.

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But House was also Wilson's chief diplomatic agent for treating with the European belligerents, a task that in turn led to his role as a principal collector and evaluator of intelligence on developments relating to the war. It was House who maintained direct relationships with the leading statesmen of Europe through his several European trips, as well as through his considerable correspondence. With the British foreign secretary, Sir Edward Grey, he communicated directly in secret code, a practice that appealed to his penchant for intrigue. He enjoyed close personal contact with the head of the British Secret Service in America, William Wiseman. From London and Berlin, Page and Gerard wrote frequently to House, and House reciprocated.

He maintained an apartment in New York, where he lived except for summer months spent in New England. To the casual observer, he might have appeared to lead a quiet life. In reality, virtually every European visitor of consequence made it a point to see him. So also did the Washington diplomatic community when the need arose and House was unavailable in the capital. Not surprisingly, perhaps, House came to believe that *his* was the vantage point from which a war-torn world might best be seen. "I cannot begin to outline here what happens from day to day", he noted in his diary in March 1916, "how information from every quarter pours into this little unobtrusive study. I believe I am the only one who gets a view of the entire picture. Some get one corner, and some another, but I seem to have it all."

House with the President at the summer White House in Cornish, NH.

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The "little unobtrusive study" was roughly four hours by train from the Oval Office. With rare exception, House made the trip only when specifically requested by the President, and his visits were normally brief. From May to October, he was absent altogether from the capital, pleading his physical inability to suffer Washington weather. There is more than one exchange of letters in which Wilson laments House's absence from Washington and House pleads in reply reasons of health. Whether House's modus operandi was simply a subtle version of the conventional wisdom that absence makes the heart grow fonder (and advisers seem more valuable), it seems to have had that effect on the President. Wilson did not appear to consider House's curious routine—curious, at least, from the perspective of today—as a sign of lack of interest. To someone as withdrawn as Wilson, the Colonel's physical absence may even have been considered normal. The two men communicated frequently by mail, the form of communication most congenial to the President. If the written word took time, this seemed less important than its greater precision. It was a different, more leisurely, age.

How prepared was House for the roles he came to play? His early biographer, Charles Seymour, wrote that for House, in contrast to a presumably more parochial Woodrow Wilson, "foreign affairs were always of the first interest and importance" and that during his earlier years in Texas "he had never ceased to study current diplomacy." How deep and systematic his study was is not clear. What is clear is that House belongs to the twentieth-century American tradition of public-spirited men of independent means for whom domestic affairs come to hold little attraction but who find fulfillment in foreign policy. Still, a desire to participate in great affairs of state, to engage in momentous undertakings, did not thereby qualify House for the roles he sought and eventually gained. Though intelligent and perceptive, he was often at a disadvantage in dealing with those for whom diplomacy was a profession, something he seems not to have appreciated. His diary entries for his 1913-14 European trips are full of "successes" he enjoyed in talks with the statesmen of the great European powers. House sees himself instructing Europeans about matters on which he finds them singularly obtuse. He frequently records the "conversions" he makes to his point of view. When war comes in the summer of 1914, he recalls his earlier predictions to the British of impending disaster and notes in his diary, "It was hard for them to think I was diagnosing the situation correctly. I take it I will have some reputation as a prophet with Sir Edward and his confreres."

It was the first of House's mistaken judgments about a man whose mind, he thought, ran "nearly parallel" with his own. "I know in advance just as I know of the President, what his views will be on almost any subject", he said of the British foreign secretary. Wilson apart, House's most important relationship during the years of neutrality was with Grey. House was much taken with Grey. Only Page exceeded the Colonel in his admiration for the foreign secretary. "I feel complimented beyond measure", House once confided to his diary after an intimate conversation with Grey, "that he has such confidence in my discretion and integrity." Grey was a person of considerable charm. Even more, his quiet demeanor and manner conveyed a man of great integrity. He had a way of persuading a listener that the latter enjoyed the secretary's complete confidence. To House, Grey's defense of the positions taken by London—whether on the need for the Allied blockade or the obstacles to mediation—was usually persuasive. A critic of the House-Grey relationship, Joyce Williams, has wittily written: "One can imagine him [Grey] deploring some British actions, but since this was the way the world worked, it had to be done. Grey could talk engagingly about sin without taint of sin himself, yet give the impression that human weakness was not alien to him. He fortified House's pro-ally feelings." It was not until late in the neutrality period that House began to take Grey's real measure. Grey had played

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an intricate game with him and had won: The British had sustained their blockade while putting off American schemes of mediation.

Even so, if Grey took House in, it was in part because House wanted to be taken in. For the most part, the Colonel was a shrewd observer. His judgments, faithfully recorded in his diary, bear this out. He was wrong in his initial appraisal of Lansing, but then he hardly knew Lansing. He was close to the mark on most. His composite portrait of the President, drawn over many pages of the diary, remains one of the most valuable we have. House was not an unkind or intolerant man. His comments on others show a considerable degree of empathy and understanding, even for those, like Page and Sir Cecil Spring-Rice, the British ambassador in Washington, who became thorns in his side (and whom he urged Wilson to act against). On more than one occasion he interceded on behalf of those—Gerard in Berlin, for example—who had incurred the President's displeasure. He supported Lansing before the President when the secretary's relationship with Wilson had reached a precarious point. He even defended Bernstorff to Wilson by noting how difficult the ambassador's position had become, something for which Bernstorff was grateful. It was a tribute to House's versatility in role playing—or, more generously, to his ability to separate the personal from the diplomatic side of a relationship—that to the very end Bernstorff seems not to have suspected that House took positions toward Germany scarcely distinguishable from those of Lansing, with whom Bernstorff had a poor personal relationship.

WHILE the intimacy between House and Wilson was very real, it was rooted in inequality. Wilson might occasionally speak of it almost in terms of a partnership; still, it was a partnership of unequals. Wilson was the dominant partner, for his was the power. At the beginning House entertained no illusions on this score. He knew his place and appreciated that he had to keep it or risk losing all. He understood that Wilson could not be urged, let alone pressured, beyond a quite modest point. Advice had to be given with care. Wilson would never tolerate being lectured to, no matter what his state of ignorance on a given matter. If an idea or course of action could be insinuated in such a way as to lead the President to believe it was his own, so much the better. House records in his diary a number of occasions in which his suggestions to Wilson turn up later as the President's.

At the outset, the inequality marking the relationship between the two men seems to have presented little difficulty for House. He looked upon Wilson with genuine respect and admiration as the authentic voice of liberal reform at home. Then the war began and, in time, told a different story. By the summer of 1915, House had begun to entertain serious doubts about Wilson's course, to question not only the substance but the methods marking the President's diplomacy. He became critical over what he deemed to be Wilson's failure to appreciate the importance of foreign policy, to take adequate measures of preparedness, and to determine upon a policy and remain steadfast in pursuing it. When the *Arabic* crisis broke in August 1915 and the President asked for House's advice, the Colonel, who favored sending Bernstorff home and recalling Gerard, wrote in his diary: "I am surprised at the attitude he takes. He evidently will go to great lengths to avoid war. He should have determined his policy when he wrote his notes of February, May, June and July. . . . If we were fully prepared, I am sure Germany would not continue to provoke us."

In the following months, these and other criticisms of the President grew more insistent until the moment, in the fall of 1916, when the flag of rebellion was covertly raised against a President no longer considered capable of carrying out his tasks. "The President must be guided", House reports saying to Frank Polk, "for he has no background of the European situation. He has always been more interested in domestic problems than in foreign affairs

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and I have never been able to get him to devote sufficient time to inform himself so as to act intelligently." House had reached the point where he believed he knew better than Wilson, that he understood Europe and the war as the President did not.

House's rebelliousness reflected more than a mounting concern over the course being taken by Wilson in late 1916. It may also be seen as an attempt, albeit an unconscious one, to seek a greater measure of equality in the relationship. By the time of Wilson's re-election, the Colonel had begun to take the notion of partnership seriously, something he would never have done in the beginning. But in the more than two years that had followed the outbreak of the war, Wilson's stature had fallen in House's eyes. He still thought, as he wrote in June 1915, "that Woodrow Wilson is the greatest asset the world has." He still supported and shared the President's lofty ideals and goals for reforming international politics. Even so, he now saw what he had come to believe were Wilson's shortcomings as a statesman.

At the same time, his sense of his own importance increased. When House left Great Britain for the United States in early June 1915, the British government assigned a naval convoy to accompany the ship on which he sailed. In his diary, House wrote: "I can understand why my life seems of so much value to them at this particular time. It is well known in both France and Great Britain that my influence has been steadily thrown on their side. If I should disappear from this picture they are fearful of what may happen." This was scarcely the musing of a man who saw his role as simply the voice of the President, charged merely with conveying to the governments of Europe what Woodrow Wilson thought—no more and no less. As House's estimate of his own role grew, his doubts over Wilson's conduct of foreign policy began to find expression. "The truth of the matter is", he wrote in a July 1915 entry,

> that the President has never realized the gravity of our unprepared position. I have urged from the beginning that the country prepare for eventualities. . . . If we had gone actively to work with all our resources to build up a war machine commensurate with our standing among the nations we would be in a position today to enforce peace. If war comes with Germany because of this submarine controversy it will be because we are totally unprepared and Germany feels that we are impotent.

Wilson had not acted on House's advice. Given his self-described "one-track mind", the President "does not seem able to carry along more than one idea at a time." Part of the problem, House thought, was his own long absences from Washington: "From the first of May until the first of October, I see him practically not at all and I find that I cannot stir him to action unless I am with him in person and undertake the prosecution largely myself."

Much of this may of course be discounted; just as Lansing was more courageous in private memoranda written to himself than in his actual dealings with Wilson, so House was in all likelihood less direct and urgent in tendering advice to the President than the impression his diary often gives. Still, what the diary may be taken accurately to convey is House's aspiration for a greater measure of equality. There is no evidence, however, that this aspiration was ever met. Wilson was generous, even lavish, in his praise of the Colonel's efforts, at times mystifyingly so in view of the results. But he remained unprepared to admit his friend to anything approaching an equality of status. What endeared House to Wilson perhaps above all else was what the President perceived to be the Colonel's complete self-effacement. House's role was to help the President achieve the right and to do so as unobtrusively as possible. House's reward would be precisely that of having helped Wilson achieve the right. Nor was this perception of House's role and reward so different from House's initial perception of himself. If Wilson and House were from the beginning a "perfect fit", as both men initially thought, it was because both had

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seen their relationship in these essential terms. The difficulty was that House's perception of the relationship changed but Wilson's did not.

We have one candid appraisal of House by the President during the period of neutrality. It was written in August 1915, in response to a letter from his bride-to-be, Edith Galt, in which she had ventured to observe that she could not "help feeling he [House] is not a very strong character", especially in comparison with the President. Galt had not yet met House. Her remark was apropos of nothing save that she had just read a letter that House had written Wilson (the President having begun the unfortunate practice of sending Galt state papers, presumably for her edification, but on which she also made frequent comment). In reply, Wilson wrote the following of his friend:

> House has a strong character—if to be disinterested and unafraid and incorruptible is to be strong. He has a noble and lovely character, too, for he is capable of utter self-forgetfulness and loyalty and devotion. And he is wise. He can give prudent and far-seeing counsel. He can find out what many men, of diverse kinds, are thinking about, and how they can be made to work together for a common purpose. He wins the confidence of all sorts of men, and wins it at once—by deserving it. But you are right in thinking that intellectually he is not a great man. His mind is not of the first class. He is a counsellor, not a statesman. And he has the faults of his qualities. His very devotion to me, his ardent desire that I should play the part in the field of international politics that he has desired and foreseen for me, makes him take sometimes the short and personal view when he ought to be taking the big and impersonal one—thinking not of my reputation for the day, but of what is fundamentally and eternally right, no matter who is for the time being hurt by it. We cannot require of every man that he should be everything.

While a generous appraisal of House's character, what Wilson found most commendable was his "utter self-forgetfulness and loyalty and devotion." If House is depicted as a man of considerable abilities—above all, an exceptional facilitator—those abilities are nevertheless seen as limited. Even within their limits, they display flaws. It is not quite the appraisal one would ordinarily expect from a "dearest friend", even one holding the high position Wilson did. And it is clearly not the appraisal of one who thinks of friendship in terms of anything resembling real equality.

House's increased sense of independence was also rooted in the unspoken differences that had developed between the two over the war and the American interest in its outcome. Wilson's great objective, never more pronounced than in the several months preceding American intervention, was to stay out of the conflict if at all possible. He also wanted, it is true, to end the war through a peace without victory. Still, if a choice had to be made between these two objectives, there is little doubt that he would have chosen to remain out of the war, even had this meant the acceptance of a German victory. Not so with House, whose strongly preferred outcome was a moderate Allied victory. If this were to prove unfeasible, House was prepared to accept an Allied victory that resulted in a harsh peace. What he did not accept, and would go to war to prevent, was a German victory.

In the last months of neutrality, this simple yet critical difference between Wilson and House came close to overshadowing the many things on which they agreed. For they were remarkably alike on their conviction of the need to reform the international system and their views on the nature of the reform needed. Had there not been a close correspondence of outlook, House could never have enjoyed Wilson's trust and played the part he did. They differed not in ideals and aspirations but in the compromises they were willing to make and in the price they were willing to pay to achieve their shared objectives. That in compromising principle Wilson was much less pliable than House, the record makes all too plain. That

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Wilson was less willing to pay the price required for establishing a new relationship with the world is equally clear. Although he had long ago disavowed isolationism, the President nevertheless retained the traditional fears of the isolationist. His view of the origins and causes of the war, with its emphasis on the moral equivalence of the belligerents, testifies to this. House was not immune from these fears. The view that all the belligerents were selfish and that, unlike America, their actions were "interested", is one of the diary's pervasive themes. "We were the only nation that desired nothing", he exclaimed to an English official in the spring of 1916: "The part we had taken [in the war] and the part we intended to take was entirely unselfish." These were Woodrow Wilson's convictions as well; they expressed the old American fears about the dangers of political entanglement with Europe. But Wilson's fears went much deeper than those of his adviser. House was willing, if necessary, to accommodate to a selfish world to an extent Wilson was not. And House was reconciled to paying the price required for effective participation in Europe's politics, whereas until March 1917, at any rate, Wilson was not.

By the summer of 1915 House believed America's participation in the war on the Allied side to be all but inevitable. With the passage of time this belief was to harden. Still, House's interventionism differed from that of Lansing and Page. While he too saw the war as a struggle between autocracy and democracy, House tempered this view with a concern for re-establishing a balance of power in post-war Europe, a concern that dictated a *moderate* Allied victory. House was never as unqualifiedly committed to the Allied cause as Page. Nor did he share Lansing's hardline position toward Germany. He was still ready to explore the possibility of bringing the war to an end without America's active participation, for he did not *desire* such participation. Yet he also did not dread this prospect, as Wilson did. Believing as he did that war was the nation's likely fate, he was prepared to make the most of it.

The difference that thus developed between Wilson and House over the war seems never to have been brought fully into the open. The agreement House concluded in February 1916 should have forced recognition of the difference. The House-Grey memorandum, after all, outlined a plan for America's military intervention on the Allied side in the event that Germany either refused to attend a peace conference called by the President (though at Allied initiative), or, having accepted the President's call, proved unwilling to accept peace terms "not unfavorable" to the Allies. That plan was a striking departure from the President's position, as defined in a letter to House before the latter's departure for Europe in late December 1915. While not without ambiguity, Wilson's instructions were clear on two vital points: House was to have nothing to do with the conventional terms of peace, only with the broad guarantees given for the future peace of the world; and if either side would declare a willingness to discuss peace on the basis of these broad guarantees, then we would in turn pledge our "moral force" to oblige the other party to do so as well. House had responded to these instructions by writing "I think we agree entirely." But the terms of the memorandum he concluded with Grey plainly showed that there had been no agreement or that, if there had been, House subsequently departed from it and egregiously so.

Yet Wilson did not remonstrate to his friend when shown the agreement. Instead, he simply inserted his several "probably"s in qualification of the obligation to enter the war against a German government that refused to attend a peace conference or that behaved unreasonably at such conference. At the time, House took no notice of Wilson's addition. In turn, Wilson expressed pleasure at the results of House's labors; the diary entry of the meeting records the President as saying, "I cannot adequately express to you my admiration and gratitude for what you have done."

It was a bizarre accounting. Given his essential position toward the war, Wilson

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could not possibly have approved of House's handiwork. On the other hand, House could not have reasonably believed he was faithfully carrying out the President's wishes. The episode has been pointed to by some as the prime example of the gulf of misunderstanding that had always existed between Wilson and House. Ray Stannard Baker was persuaded that there had never been a "clear, sharp understanding between the two men. It was House's practice to approve everything, or almost everything, the President said: and Wilson assumed that House completely understood his mind. . . . It was the fatal flaw in their relationship and led to infinite confusion and thwarted effort." Wilson's lifelong error, as Baker saw it, "was to suppose that men whom he accepted as his friends—sorely needed intimate friends—not only loved him, but understood completely his clear and swift-running mind, and agreed with him in all things."

This was the view of a Wilson admirer and a House critic. Baker did not raise the question why House approved of "almost everything" Wilson said and thereby presumably misled the President. House was not a mere sycophant, whatever his other failings. Yet experience had taught him that candor with Wilson could prove dangerous and argument more so. Wilson was not even receptive to the efforts of others at "clarification." And since he assumed, as Baker emphasized, that his friends completely understood and agreed with him there was no need with intimates to make special efforts to achieve clarity so as to ensure there was on a given issue a meeting of minds. The several exchanges between the two men that form the background of House's mission often have an ambiguous and inconclusive character. Did Wilson's silence signify agreement as House more than once thought? Were key terms—e.g., intervention—used on both sides with the same meaning? In retrospect, it is apparent that House and Wilson were often like two ships passing one another on a dark night.

Yet after these considerations are duly taken into account, the fact remains that House's instructions were clear on the points that mattered most to Wilson, and that House had simply ignored them. Perhaps he did so because he had come to believe that the President had placed the negotiations with the belligerents entirely in his hands and that he was virtually a free agent in conducting them. In place of Wilson's scheme of mediation—one that was as evenhanded and impartial as his neutrality policy was partial—House had substituted a thinly disguised plan for intervening on the side of the Allies. Why had Wilson not voiced his disappointment, even his displeasure? Was this not proof that House not only disagreed with the President but had subverted his policy?

That Wilson's response was to praise House for his work said a great deal about the relationship between the two men. Reproof, Wilson may well have thought, would have seriously altered his friendship with House, perhaps even destroyed it. This he could not bring himself to do at the time. Besides, he must have felt that House had acted with the best intentions. At any rate, it was done. Friendship apart, the agreement could not be rejected, and House virtually disavowed, without incurring considerable cost diplomatically. Wilson could only dilute the force of the undertaking stipulated in the agreement, something that he promptly did. He could also attempt to turn the agreement House had concluded to his end of stopping the war, for Wilson was persuaded that if the war could once be stopped, for whatever reason, the belligerent governments would never be able to restart it. But Grey showed little disposition to cooperate in an undertaking he had probably never taken very seriously, and the exchanges of the spring and summer of 1916 were altogether barren of result. The Allies no longer had much confidence in Wilson's promises. Even had this not been the case, they would have resisted proposals to end the war, for they were intent on gathering the fruits of complete victory. House's

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terms of moderate victory, even had they been assured of Wilson's support for them, held little attraction.

The House-Grey memorandum marked the high point during the period of neutrality of House's influence. The Colonel, in Wilson's eyes, had supped once too often with the devil and had lost. In the following months, Wilson's latent distrust of Allied motives rose to the surface, there to remain. Determined more than ever to stay out of the war, he moved slowly toward the peace initiative that House had earlier managed to shunt aside. In this Wilson acted as consistently as did House, who quickly recovered from his initial disappointment over Grey's lack of response, and again took up the cause of the Allies to an increasingly deaf President. The record of their exchanges of late fall 1916 shows how far apart they had moved.

IV

WILSON'S UNHAPPINESS with his advisers has no simple explanation. Certainly they made mistakes, some quite serious. Yet their mistakes must be seen against the background of having to serve a President who was often withdrawn and uncommunicative. Both Lansing and House complained of frequently being kept in the dark about the President's wishes and intentions, though Lansing's complaints were the more insistent. Nor were their complaints without justification, for Wilson frequently failed to provide clear guidance to his subordinates. In Lansing's case, this failure was largely the result of an increasingly poor relationship and the President's growing distrust of his secretary of state. But it was also the consequence of Wilson's almost congenital reluctance, bordering on an inability, to plan for the near future. This was a serious defect and especially so in the circumstances of the neutrality period. Yet Wilson could not seem to remedy it, as he once admitted in a letter to Edith Galt: "The fact is, I never have had any patience with 'ifs' and conjectural cases. My mind insists always upon waiting until something actually does happen and then discussing what is to be done about that." This weakness was of recurring concern to Lansing and House. "There is another thing I cannot bring the President to realize", House wrote in his diary on March 29, 1916, during the *Sussex* crisis, "and that is the importance of making ready to meet the crisis which may fall upon him any day. He was compelled to go into Mexico at a moment's notice. The same will happen in the European situation and we are inert as if it were a remote possibility of some future age. I have urged him ever since the war began to make ready, and we are no more ready today than we were two years ago." It was not easy to serve a President who dreamed of the millennium but was unwilling to consider the possibilities of tomorrow.

Wilson's unhappiness with his advisers was often reciprocated, then, by their frustration with him. This mutual dissatisfaction, moreover, had roots that went beyond differences in the method and conduct of diplomacy. What the President wanted from his advisers was something they could not give him and would not give him even if they could: deliverance from a difficult and perilous position. They could not give him such deliverance because Wilson's position was rooted in a contradiction that could not be resolved. There was no way by which America's established neutrality could be maintained without incurring an ever increasing risk of war with Germany. Wilson's anger over the additional blockade measures taken by the British in the summer of 1916 reflected this sense of entrapment, for these measures did not significantly alter a system of control over neutral trade to which he had long given his consent.

By 1916, the President's assistants could not have devised successful schemes for significantly altering the terms of neutrality even had they wanted to do so. In any case, they clearly did not want to do so for those terms favored the Allies, and they had long been committed to the Allied cause. While they followed Wilson's efforts in the fall of

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1916 to pressure the Allies to abandon the most irksome of the blockade measures, they did so only reluctantly. Lansing, though he could not quite bring himself to abandon his old habit of acting as the President's faithful legal adviser, wrote in a private memorandum of September: "Nothing in our controversies with Great Britain must be brought to a head. . . . I will never sign an ultimatum to Great Britain." House apparently shared this view.

The gulf separating Wilson from his advisers was never more apparent than in the closing months of the neutrality period. It was vividly illustrated in the events that led to and attended the President's peace note of December 1916. The peace note was pure Wilson. It expressed his deepest convictions. In calling upon the belligerents to declare in specific—not general—terms what it was they were fighting for and what they meant by victory, Wilson acted from motives that were utterly devoid of any favoritism to either side. The peace note was the public expression of the thought developed in his unpublished prolegomenon (which he apparently showed to no one) that made clear his belief that the war had no meaning save "untold human suffering", that neither side's contentions could be supported, and that as between German militarism and British navalism there was little to choose. Yet the war might still serve a great purpose if it could be used to destroy the psychological and political bases for future wars. For this a peace without victory was indispensable; nothing else would drive home the lesson for future generations that war was the Great Illusion.

The peace note was intended as the first step to be taken down the road marked out by the prolegomenon. Wilson was determinedly prepared to entertain a favorable response from either side. If Germany were forthcoming, he was ready to exert the greatest pressure he could on the Allies to reciprocate—a prospect that filled his assistants with apprehension, and against the risks of which they came close to rebelling. Even after Wilson moderated his course, in response to their objections, his secretary of state sought to subvert the initiative.

A case can be made that Wilson's advisers were never really candid in their dealings with him, that their counsel often obscured their real convictions, and that if the result was not to deceive the President it was at least to mislead him. Even Page, the most open of Wilson's assistants, was occasionally guilty of voicing apparent convictions that in all likelihood he did not hold. But Lansing and House made a regular practice of doing so. Never once did Lansing reveal his true position to the President. Instead, a strong interventionist intent was invariably presented in the disguise of legal issues that were equated with the nation's honor, self-respect, and regard for the dictates of humanity. House was only slightly more direct. Only toward the close of the neutrality period, when Wilson was plainly intent on pursuing his peace initiative even at the risk of a possible break with the Allies, did House depart from his strategy of indirection in dealing with the President—and for this momentary candor he paid the price of exclusion from Wilson's confidence in the latter's preparation of his peace note.

If Wilson's advisers were less than forthright in their dealings with him, it was not because they had a common character defect. They knew that were they even once to strongly urge Wilson to a course he was averse to taking, let alone openly argue with him, they were likely to lose altogether what modest influence they had. They increasingly opposed the President's course as time went by and believed it would lead to unfortunate results were it not to be abandoned. Given Wilson's temperament, their only recourse was to disguise and, if necessary, to mislead. The necessity of that recourse would persist even in the wake of Germany's declaration, on January 31, 1917, of unrestricted submarine warfare. Only Wilson's decision for war in March would bring that necessity to an end. □

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Europe on the Brink

Democratic Values and the Single Currency

Michael Portillo

THE PROCESS of European political integration is moving at speed, cheered on by the United States. Europe, the argument goes, has been the place where the wars start, wars into which America is ultimately dragged, and European political union will put an end to such conflicts. And as far as U.S. foreign policy is concerned, things will be a good deal easier once there is a common European foreign and security policy, providing, as it were, the State Department with a single number to call in Europe.

Those assumptions need to be questioned. The single currency, due to commence next year, is a leap in the dark. Never has a group of sovereign nations attempted such a pooling before. Never have democracies been willing to invest so much power over the lives of their citizens in a body—in this case the European Central Bank—which is not democratically accountable. The tussle is on between the German bankers, who want to ensure that the currency will hold its value as reliably as their beloved Mark has done, and the rest, who fear for the impact of such austerity on their rates of unemployment.

We do not yet know whether the euro will be soft and inflationary, or hard and recessionary. In either event, chaos and recrimination in Europe are not in the U.S. interest. As I shall argue in this essay, those who believe that political union is the key to avoiding conflict have got it wrong. Rather, future danger lies precisely in forcing nation-states into an artificial political union that will transfer policy-making from the individual states, which are democratic, to the European Union, which in itself is not. The traditional danger in Europe has come from extremist nationalism. Political union seems likely to rekindle it, as national interests are ignored by policymakers who are both remote and irremovable.

There is more to a common European foreign policy than an easier life for State Department switchboard operators. At the time of writing, the United Kingdom is once again giving its willing support to the United States in its policy toward Iraq. Time and again, the United States and Britain have made common cause in the defense of liberty. There are few if any other nations who support America so dependably, and Britain's diplomatic backing is, I believe, an important asset for Washington.

If political union extends to the creation of a common European foreign and security policy, arrived at by qualified majority voting amongst the member states, the United States will stand to lose that backing. As recent history demonstrates, it is inconceivable that a common European policy would normally back America, or be generally robust. Indeed, the motivation of some of those now striving to

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create political union in Europe is to establish a new bloc with a distinctive policy outlook that will be at best un-American, and quite possibly anti-American.

I suggest that it is time for Americans to take a more careful look at what is happening in Europe and, before cheering political union to the finishing line, to re-assess very carefully where their country's real interests lie.

* * *

I INTEND TO DISCUSS the issue of the European single currency not as it is often talked of in Britain, as though it were merely an economic device which can be measured simply in terms of material costs and benefits. I wish to examine it rather in the terms regularly used by Britain's European partners. They see it frankly as a project reshaping the way our continent is governed, to create a political union that can free Europe from the fear of conflict between its nations.

On the face of it, this may strike many as an excellent idea. In the last two centuries the peoples of Europe have paid a terrible price in wars. The Napoleonic Wars ravaged Europe for the best part of two decades. In World War I, fifteen million were killed, mainly soldiers. In World War II, the toll was at least forty-one million, of whom most were civilians. There is no higher or more important objective for politicians in Europe than to work for policies that may better guarantee the security of our continent and avoid a repetition of the dreadful slaughter of our modern history.

We can distinguish two causes at the root of these past European conflicts. The first was Franco-German rivalry. Prussia and Austria invaded France in 1793 and 1813. France occupied Prussian and Austrian territory between 1805 and 1813. Prussia dealt the French army a swift defeat in 1870, and went on to besiege the French capital, causing many Parisians to die of starvation. Germany invaded France in the opening stages of both world wars. Understandably therefore, since the Second World War much effort has been devoted to creating political institutions, and other links, to bind the former adversaries together.

A second cause of past conflict was the so-called Eastern Question in its various forms. There was the clash, both ideological and territorial, between the empires of Christendom and the Islamic empire of the Ottomans. The assassination in Sarajevo of an Austrian archduke, and Austria's revenge for it on Serbia, provided the spark for the outbreak of the Great War in 1914. But Germany's suspicion and fear of Russia, another part of the wider Eastern Question, were a more fundamental cause of that war. The mutual aggression between totalitarian regimes in Germany and Russia supplied the bitterest and most costly conflict of the Second World War. In contrast to what has been done in the Franco-German case, comparatively little effort has been devoted to bringing Russia fully into the family of Western nations, or to building bridges between Christendom and Islam in Europe, a matter I shall return to later. First, let us look at how efforts to resolve the rivalry between France and Germany have been taken forward.

The Idea of a United Europe

THE IDEAL of creating a united Europe, even a United States of Europe, arose as part of the humanist-pacifist tradition long before the wars of the twentieth century, but until the end of the Second World War it was largely confined to academics and dreamers. Thereafter, it was taken up by statesmen like Altiero Spinelli and Jean Monnet.

These two men embodied two distinct approaches to European unity, and the distinction is important even today. Spinelli was a federalist, believing that local, regional, national, and European authorities should complement each other. Monnet was a functionalist, believing that, one by one, critical functions, and therefore ultimately sovereignty itself, should be transferred from the national to the European level. In the official

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European Community literature of the 1990s it is argued that "today the two approaches have been merged." Perhaps so. The Maastricht Treaty owes much to a functionalist approach, with its proposals that Europe should acquire its own defense and foreign policies and its own currency. But federalists will be happy with that, it is said, since the result is nonetheless federation—that is, the creation of a new political entity with the critical characteristic of a federation in that its laws are binding on the member states.

Those who support the creation of a European federation sometimes argue that federalism is generally misunderstood in Britain. They tell us that in continental Europe it is about decentralization, and that federal constitutions in a number of European states emphasize the devolution of powers to states or regions. But the federalism that is being unfolded at the European level is not like that. The process of integration now being pursued from one intergovernmental conference to the next is highly centralizing and owes much to the Monnet-functionalist approach.

While Spinelli, Monnet, and others were advancing European unity by whatever means they could, which in their day meant mostly devising institutions governing economic and trading relations in Europe, Britain held aloof from that process, while committing itself directly to European security. Clearly it is a myth that Britain has never cared about Europe. The British Empire lost nearly a million combatants in the First World War. In the Second World War, hundreds of thousands of British people died at home, or fighting in and around Europe, because of a commitment to the freedom of the continent.

Following that war, at a time when the nature of the Soviet empire was becoming clear, the British foreign secretary at the time, Ernest Bevin, committed Britain to a Western Union, an alliance of European and non-European states dedicated to providing their peoples with security. In 1954 attempts to create a European Defense Community were scuppered by France. But again a British foreign secretary, in this case Anthony Eden, made an historic commitment on behalf of his country to maintain land and air forces in Europe for the following forty years, thus providing an unmistakable guarantee of Britain's willingness to fulfill its obligations if the security of our allies were ever violated. It was a remarkable undertaking for an island nation to make, especially given its traditional policy of maintaining a small army and avoiding continental military commitments.

WE NEED TO bear in mind this history in order to understand the strength of the impetus to European integration. The momentum derives fundamentally from an understandable fear of war. That is what lies behind Chancellor Kohl's famous remark that European integration is "a question of war and peace." We all subscribe wholeheartedly to the objective of achieving peace and security.

Furthermore, Europe is right to sweep away barriers to trade, investment, and mobility across the boundaries of the nation-states of our continent. But there are many different means by which those objectives can be achieved. The functionalist, that is to say centralizing, model now being applied by the European Commission (EC), and by most of our partner countries, is not the only available paradigm. Nor are all those who oppose the present course anti-European, still less chauvinist or xenophobic. General de Gaulle was famously in favor of a "*Europe des patries*", and opposed the tendency of the EC to acquire new powers for itself. He employed rough tactics to establish the principle that nation-states should not be overruled by majorities on matters of vital national interest. How could it be that someone who valued Europe, who had fought for its freedom and knew as much as anyone did about war, still nurtured a belief in the nation-state?

The answer to that question requires us to consider more deeply the causes of conflict. Those who want to create a United States of

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Europe believe that nationalism has been the principal cause. They think that if you can replace the nation-states, and make the nations of Europe dependent on each other in a new European state, you will have abolished the main cause of war.

But it is not enough to assert that European wars have been caused by rampant nationalism. Two other elements have also been necessary: despotism and a sense of grievance. In all the European wars of the last two centuries the aggressors were despots: French revolutionaries, kaisers, emperors, Hitler, Stalin. They capitalized ruthlessly on some supposed injustice done to their nation, some piece of territory that had to be restored to the mother or fatherland, some minority that yearned to be set free from its foreign repressor.

The Centrality of Democracy

EUROPE OWES its security since World War II less to the absence of nationalism than to the presence of democracy. By far the greatest achievement in Europe at the end of the Second World War was the restoration of democracy in Germany and Italy, and the liberation of those countries that had been conquered by the Axis powers. Subsequently, Spain, Portugal, and Greece rejoined the family of democratic nations. My father fought for democracy in Spain and was a refugee from tyranny for twenty years. To see democracy restored there brought my family great joy. Following the fall of the Iron Curtain, most of Eastern Europe and even Russia have become young democracies, bringing a similar joy to the millions who had suffered there. Democracy is precious to everyone, but its value is most appreciated by those who know what it is to be without it.

The European Union, along with NATO and other European institutions, has played an important part in the extension of democracy through Europe. The member states of those institutions have provided a shining example of both freedom and material success, and Western institutions have supplied the template of democratic values to be reproduced by the new democracies if they are to aspire to join those institutions as new members. Europe is more secure from conflict within the continent now than ever before precisely because there have never been so many democracies as now, for it is almost inconceivable that democracies would go to war with one another.

Viewed in these terms, democracy acquires a special value. It is not merely, as Churchill said, the worst system except for all the rest; it is *the* form of government that best assures peace. If we do not have peace and security, we cannot hope to achieve anything decent in life. For all its alleged deficiencies, without democracy the abyss would yawn before us. *And that is precisely why European integration is not the means to achieve the security of our continent.* For that integration is being designed in a way that, if persisted in, will sharply reduce democratic control. If we shoehorn the nations of Europe into an artificial union, we will not abolish nationalism; on the contrary, we shall risk stirring it up, while at the same time undermining democracy. The danger is that we shall make people feel that their national interests are being overlooked, and that they cannot assert them through the ballot. That risks exactly what the architects of the new Europe wish to avoid: destabilizing Europe, creating tensions, and releasing resentments that damage the present good relations among European nations.

The earliest Greek democracy depended on a very small populace—the people or commons of a city, those who could be expected to gather together in one place. Their *commonality* was evident. In the modern world it is more difficult to be precise about what constitutes a *people.* It is obviously a matter of great controversy and can be subject to change. Most nation-states have a common language, but not all. Most nation-states have a principal nationality or ethnic group, but not all. Many nation-states are geographically homogeneous, containing only one ethnic and cultural group within their borders. But some are not.

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The United States of America would not score very high on any of these criteria, and yet it is undoubtedly a nation-state. Its people are bound together by a clearly articulated sense of national purpose and by a set of shared values, by a vision of themselves and their place in the world. All of that provides them with the things in common that make them a people. Much the same could be said of most of the nation-states of Europe, though admittedly some to a greater and others to a lesser extent.

For democracy to work, people need to have more than just a vote. They need to feel a part of the institutions to which they elect representatives, to feel properly represented in those bodies. They need to believe that their vote can change things. When they do not, problems can arise even within well-established nation-states. It seems, for example, that a majority of Scottish people do not now feel confident on those points with regard to the parliament at Westminster.

The Scottish example is interesting because there is no ethnic or linguistic difference between the Scots and English. England, Scotland, and Wales are, taken together, geographically homogeneous and distinct. The three nations share many common values and the sense of a larger national—that is, British—identity. Little wonder, then, that the Basques, Catalonians, Bretons, Bavarians, and other groups in Europe are unhappy—or worse—when they feel that the critical decisions that affect their daily lives are taken in a forum within which they do not see themselves as properly represented.

The important conclusion for the purposes of my argument with respect to Europe is that we will be storing up the causes of future resentment and unrest if policy which affects people's lives and livelihoods is made by bodies that are perceived as distant, or are believed to be composed of people who are not democratically accountable. The sort of domestic political decisions about which people rightly feel very strongly are those that affect the level of taxes, unemployment, and interest rates.

The Single Currency

THAT BRINGS US to the single currency. The proposal to institute such a thing in Europe involves a bigger step toward centralized decision-making than any that has been taken before. It seems difficult for many people in Britain to grasp that the fundamental motivation for such a move is political, not economic. As Dr. Helmut Hesse, a member of the directorate of the Bundesbank, has said, monetary union is to be seen "as the last step in a process of integration that began only a few years after the Second World War in order to bring peace and prosperity to Europe." Dr. Hesse sees it in those clear terms even though, as a banker, one might expect him rather to highlight the economic significance of the change.

With a single currency, the responsibility for monetary policy will pass from the governments of the member states, or from their central banks, to the EU central bank. Member states will be compelled also to transfer their foreign reserves from their national central banks to the European Central Bank. They will also be required to limit their borrowing to maintain convergence. The effect of transferring reserves will be to make it extremely difficult for any member state to run a deficit; the motivation for limiting its borrowing is to provide a means for imposing sanctions against it, should it nonetheless persist in running such a deficit. It does not take much imagination to realize that a constraint on the level of borrowing in practice translates into a severe curtailment of the freedom to decide both the level of public spending and the rate of taxation.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown, has claimed that there is "no question of giving up our ability to make decisions on tax and spending." I do not know whether that claim owes more to naivety or to dishonesty. Contrast it with the unequivocal conclusion of the chairman of the Bundesbank, Hans Tietmeyer, who hides nothing when he says: "A European currency will lead to mem-

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ber states transferring their sovereignty over financial and wage policy, as well as in monetary affairs. It is an illusion to think that states can hold on to their autonomy over taxation policy." The consequences have also been accurately represented by Chancellor Kohl: "We want the political unification of Europe. If there is no monetary union, then there cannot be political union, and vice-versa." Indeed, there is no currency in the world that is not controlled by a sovereign state, and no sovereign country of significant size that does not control its own currency.

But other advocates of the single currency often play down the significance of its implications. For example, they argue that there is not much difference between giving responsibility for the level of interest rates to a national central bank and passing it to a European institution. There is a huge difference. A national central bank is or should be responsible to the national parliament or to the government. Because its role and scope are embedded within a democratic constitution, it can be held accountable for its performance. Failures can be punished by dismissal of the governor or board. The European Central Bank will not be responsible to any democratic body, and the single currency itself is claimed to be irreversible.

Decisions about interest rates are in effect decisions about rates of inflation and unemployment, the most sensitive of all policy matters. If people feel that in elections they are unable to give their view of economic management through their vote, or replace the people who make the policy, they will rightly feel that their democracy no longer counts for much. What will be the point of voting for political parties if they are powerless to change policy? Electors will feel resentful and cheated.

When people feel like that, they become vulnerable to extremist influences, something which we should wish at all costs to avoid. Where democracy is working, intolerance and political extremism do not attract widespread support. Nasty minorities remain merely that, because the majority retains its confidence in the democratic system. The population believes that grievances can be remedied, or at least that those responsible for things that they do not like can be dispatched at the polls. But once large numbers of people cease to have faith in the system, extremism can quickly take hold, including extremist nationalism.

No Exit

ENTHUSIASTS for the single currency contend that arguments against transferring control of the currency are based on an out-of-date view of national sovereignty, since these days the scope for independent action by each country is already severely constrained by economic events elsewhere.

It is of course true that we are all affected by events outside our control; but considerable scope for independent action remains. The Bundesbank evidently feels that it has considerable autonomy despite the impact of global forces. In Britain's case, the point is most easily demonstrated by contrasting our experience earlier in this decade inside the ERM (which made it impossible for us to reduce our interest rates below 10 percent, and indeed on the last day of membership caused us to propose raising them to 15 percent), with our experience subsequently, when we were able to cut interest rates to about 5 percent. There are degrees of freedom, and the fact that we are not totally independent of outside influences is no argument for throwing away the considerable scope for action that we still possess. More importantly, our *right* to make choices for ourselves should not be given up on such spurious grounds.

Following Britain's ignominious exit from the ERM, the British people were free to vote against the Conservatives who had taken them into it, causing the loss of many homes, businesses, and jobs. If we were members of a single currency and the key decisions were taken by the European Central Bank, voters would no longer be able to vote out the people who made harmful economic decisions. What is

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more, at least in the case of the ERM it was possible, however painfully, for Britain to leave and thus to reverse policy. There is to be, we are told, no exit from the single currency.

SOME WHO KNOW these arguments will object that democratic accountability for the European Central Bank's decisions could and should be established at a European level through the European Parliament. The point demonstrates the success that Monnet and his successors have had over the years. In the period following the war it was impossible to find many advocates of the visionary notion of a United States of Europe. But the pioneers of European integration patiently made what progress they could with smaller scale projects in the economic field, leading in due course to the idea of a single currency. The single currency, however, will require the centralization of decision-making to such an extent that, with its imposition, even those who have until now opposed the whole idea are likely to cry out for the creation of centralized democratic institutions in order to provide some element of popular control.

This points up the crucial fact that *the creation of the European state has been approached in reverse order to the creation of almost any other.* Normally, a new state establishes its institutions of government first, and then goes on to create its policies and its currency. In this case, the common European policies and the currency are being created first, with the intention that these should lead to demands, in the name of logic and democracy, for the formation of the institutions of centralized European government.

The European Parliament is not currently perceived by the British people, perhaps not by any other associated population either, as a representative body invested with much democratic trust and authority. That is not merely because it is in its infancy. You can create the apparatus of a state at European level, with a common frontier, a single immigration policy, a common foreign and defense policy, and a single currency. But democracy requires not only the *cracy* but also the *demos*, not only the state but also the people. What we do not have, and what we cannot conjure up, is a *demos*—a single European people.

If the Scots now doubt that a democracy spanning from John o' Groats to Land's End is capable of making every part of a compact island country feel properly represented, then certainly no parliament whose authority would span from Dublin to Athens, and which would be charged with the critical decisions affecting the lives and livelihoods of all the various peoples between those two points, would be capable of satisfying the democratic requirements and aspirations of each of our populations. The peoples of Europe are too different from one another, their histories, cultures, languages, and values are too diverse, for them to be brought together into one state. We can and should work closely together and co-operate for mutual benefit, but Europeans do not have a common identity or view of their role in world affairs. They do not constitute a nation, and since they do not we should not try to create a European nation-state. We should not try to do at a European level things that nation-states should do. It is the latter who should take the most sensitive policy decisions because they require democratic control, and democracy can work only in a country in which people share values, history, and cultural tradition.

Misreading the Future

ONE OF THE boldest efforts of propaganda by the enthusiasts for European integration is the attempt to portray themselves as modern and forward-looking. They are the opposite. They are mainly motivated by a fear that the past may repeat itself, that is that Franco-German rivalry or rampant German nationalism may re-awaken. They propose a centralization of power that runs flatly in a direction opposite to the march of history. Have we not seen in our own lifetimes one old empire after another dissolving, and unions of states collapsing in failure?

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The European integrationists are out-of-date in another way too. They see European political union as a necessary response to global competition, believing that we must react to the challenge posed by industrial and trading giants like the United States and Japan by creating a giant Europe. Chancellor Kohl has claimed that "the nation-state . . . cannot solve the great problems of the twenty-first century", and that Europe has to "assert itself." Dr. Hesse has said that "a multiplicity of small states is not suitable for the world economy today."

That sounds plausible but is false. Global competition is indeed between industrial giants, but they are giant companies, not nation-states. There may well be an argument for industrial mergers in Europe, for example between defense contractors in France, Germany, and Britain. But that is a completely separate agenda from political integration. Paradoxically, some of the people who are spurring us on toward political union are also those who still believe in national protectionism, and therefore refuse to implement policies that would bring about European industrial rationalization.

Some of those who think that the right response to global competition is to create a bigger state also believe in a bigger role for the state through more interference and regulation. That frame of mind has produced the Social Chapter, and is a strong influence within New Labour. Such people believe that global competition will whittle away worker protection and social standards in the developed world, and that we must create a large European corral in which they can be defended against outside pressures. True, New Labour is divided on this issue, and it also spends a part of its time arguing against such protectionism, advocating the spread of flexible labor markets instead. In that second view they are right. Flexibility, along with rising educational standards, will enable us to compete *and* to improve our social standards. Excessive interference by governments, whether at national or European level, is clumsy and unresponsive, and it has already played a large part in creating unemployment levels in Europe well above those of the United States.

We are being led toward a Europe that displays many of the characteristics of Britain twenty years ago, a Britain, let it be remembered, that was reduced to borrowing massively from the IMF. Europe is populated with over-manned and protected nationalized industries. In many places private sector managers are in thrall to trade unions. Business is tied down by government bureaucracy and interventionism. Public spending is appallingly high. There persists the belief that Europe can go its own sweet way, unaffected by the assault from international competition, provided that the fortress walls are built high enough. Twenty million unemployed Europeans give mute testimony—mute up until now—to the failure of those policies.

To present all of this as forward-looking is indeed a triumph for the spin doctors. It is completely misleading.

Britain's Interests

THERE ARE THOSE who argue that even if it is true that the single currency requires the centralization of important policy-making, and even if the sort of representative democracy to which we have become accustomed in our nation-states cannot be re-created at the European level, we are likely to get better decisions from the European Central Bank than we have had from our own governments in the past, and that will make people happier.

That is hard to believe. Unaccountable bureaucracy does not produce better decisions than democracy. The corruption and inefficiency in Europe's Common Agricultural Policy is surely sufficient proof of that. Furthermore, there is no evidence that a single currency will lead to better policies, greater stability, or greater economic success for its members. The single currency will be traded in world markets against other curren-

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cies. Whether it is more stable than the national currencies it replaces will depend on how good the policies are of those who control it. There has been no stability between the currencies of the United States and Japan—the world's largest and second-largest economies. Currency stability is an illusion, and in Asia there are now on display the scalps of many men who declared that their currencies would hold their values.

The case for Britain joining a single currency has lost whatever appeal it might have had when first presented a few years back. Five or ten years ago it was plausible to argue that Britain would be forever dogged by inflation, and therefore doomed to resort continually to devaluation in order to maintain competitiveness. Unemployment in the UK was stubbornly high. By contrast, Germany appeared to have discovered the secret of non-inflationary growth, and was able to compete successfully in the world on the basis of quality, despite the strength of its currency. How much better, the argument went, for Britain to give up control over its own economy in order to reap the benefits of the German economic miracle. Things look rather different now. Britain has gained control of inflation by its own efforts. It has lower unemployment than most of its European neighbors, and that is just one of many indicators that it is competing successfully. The current concern is not with devaluation, but with the strength of the pound.

Mr. Blair has said that he wishes to decide whether to enter a single currency solely on the basis of an economic assessment of Britain's best interest. I have argued that this misses the point of what is really involved in the decision. But, in any case, the economic case is very weak. It has been argued that the single currency is the logical completion of the single market. It is not. The greatest trading partners in the world, Canada and the United States, do not have a common currency and have no plans to establish one. At present, none of the countries with which Britain trades has the same currency as we do, and yet our trade with them goes on rising. I can see that there would be a small saving on transaction costs for companies trading within Europe if we were all to have the same currency, but it would be marginal. Against that, British industry should ask itself whether it really wishes to enter the next recession with the currency locked at its present level, and with the British government powerless to vary interest rates.

The grave danger for Europe, economically speaking, flows from the consequence of introducing a single currency where no single labor market exists. A single currency means that, in the future, variations in economic performance between one region and another cannot result, as they do today, in a downward adjustment of the currency in the less successful areas. Interest rates will have to reflect policy established at the center, not local conditions. The full impact of recession will therefore fall on unemployment.

In the United States, a vast area covered by a single currency, labor is very mobile. People who lose their jobs in a depressed area can and do move to another state in search of a job, however inconvenient it may be. But in our continent people cannot move at will to find new work. They face barriers related to language, qualifications, local culture, and plain prejudice. Some of those can be reduced with the passage of time, but most will prove intractable. Indeed, with the so-called Posted Workers Directive, approved under the Social Chapter, EU labor ministers seem determined to *reduce* labor mobility across borders.

There is another danger. Britain currently receives a notably high proportion of the inward investment coming from the rest of the world into Europe. Those investors clearly see value in Britain's membership of the EU and free access to its markets. But they also see it as an advantage that the British economy is more flexible and deregulated than most others in Europe, and over the last eighteen years has offered them stability and reassurance. In other words, Britain derives an advantage from not embracing all European economic policies.

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If we join the euro, this advantage will be lost, as economic policy in Britain will be determined principally by events in the geographical center of the EU. There may well be a mismatch between conditions in Britain and Germany. Interest rates that suit Germany and France could be inappropriate to British economic circumstances, as they were when we were in the ERM. That will represent a bad risk for investors. It may then make more sense for them to invest where local economic conditions and interest rates are most closely related, that is in Germany. Imagine the impact upon British public opinion if unemployment is high, inward investors are drifting away, the government is powerless to vary interest rates, and the electorate is unable to change anything by electing a new one.

The Question of Security

I BEGAN BY recognizing the importance of European security. All other objectives are secondary. The principal guarantor of peace in Europe has been NATO, which has provided a wholly credible deterrent against attack. With American troops positioned in Europe, and the awesome U.S. military capability evident, any potential adversary was wise to believe that America would go to war to preserve the territory of its European allies.

The establishment of NATO did not infringe upon the sovereignty of its members. Its treaty is explicitly an agreement of sovereign states who undertake, in accordance with Article V, to regard the violation of the territory of another member state as though it were a violation of their own and to respond with such action *as they deem necessary*. NATO has no federalist destiny. In the half century since it was founded, and unlike the EU, it has passed no laws that bind its member states, and no court has extended its influence. In no way has it increased its powers since 1948, and the democratic accountability of its member governments has not been affected.

NATO is now responding to the new situation created by the end of the Cold War, recognizing that the greatest contribution it can make to security is to strengthen the new democracies of Europe. Membership in either NATO or the EU, or in both, can help underpin those democracies. The EU should follow NATO's example. It should be lowering the barriers for entry by the countries of Eastern Europe, not creating an inner core that requires qualifications that those countries cannot hope to attain. Negotiating admission for new members looks as if it will be a protracted, and maybe cantankerous, business.

The EU must also address itself to the remaining security issues on our continent. We need to do all we can to make Russia feel welcome in the family of Western democracies. Membership in either NATO or the EU is impractical, not least because Russia is a vast Asian as well as European power. But, again, the EU ought to be demolishing fences rather than erecting them.

In the case of Turkey, the EU seems to be almost careless in its behavior. The EU has made it clear to Turkey that, although it applied for membership years ago, there is no early prospect of admission. Meanwhile countries that have only recently become democratic and pro-Western are politely ushered to positions higher up the queue. Few things could be more important for our security than that Turkey should remain democratic and well-disposed toward the West. It is being kept at bay, partly because some European leaders apparently see the EU as a subset of Christendom, and partly because, with its manifest social problems, Turkey's inclusion would create substantial problems of integration. We have had to put heavy reliance on Turkey as a NATO ally during our conflicts with Iraq. It is very difficult for the Turkish government to sell to its people the merits of being a good member of NATO, and it is difficult for us to persuade Turkey to be reasonable over the Cyprus problem, when it is offered so little and treated so brusquely by the EU. Here is an instance where the EU has a clear choice between on the one hand main-

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taining its preoccupation with achieving "ever closer European union", and on the other hand using its enlargement to enhance the security of its members. It appears to have made the wrong choice. It has failed to think strategically.

THE TURKISH CASE serves to illustrate a broader truth. Those who are most influencing the progress of Europe have become dreadfully confused. They believe that European integration is the only guarantee of future security, and they are pursuing the objective with a single-mindedness that borders on fanaticism. They are wrong. It is democracy that provides our greatest hope of future peace and prosperity. We should use our Atlantic and European institutions in every way we can to spread democracy and nurture it where it takes root.

The EU is entirely made up of member states that are democracies. But the EU itself is not democratic. Neither the EC, nor the Council of Ministers, nor the European Central Bank is democratically accountable; and they cannot be made so, because Europe is not a nation. It follows that the more we transfer decision-making away from the democratic member states to the undemocratic EU, the less shall we enjoy democratic accountability.

Moving away from democratic control is retrograde in itself, but it is also highly dangerous because disillusion and grievance provide a breeding ground for extremist passions of various kinds. In the interests of security, tolerance, and harmony among nations, in the interests of preserving the most valued gain of the postwar period, which is democracy, we should turn from the headlong rush toward European political integration, in which the single currency will be a decisive and irrevocable step. □

And It's Not Just the EU Anymore

A democratic society, of course, requires a polity. And for better or worse, the locus of the polity is the nation-state. There is no global state, hence no global polity and no global citizenship. I am a voting citizen of the United States of America, not of the Republic of Nafta.

Simple globalism removes from the compass of democratic deliberation key questions of self-governance. Several Asian nations are now, in effect, wards of the International Monetary Fund. More subtly, the pressures of laissez-faire globalism remove from national deliberation key questions of political economy that have no scientifically 'correct' answer—what should be social, what should be private? Regional development policies, social safety net policies, cultural policies, industrial policies, and more have all been challenged as counter to the rules of GATT or NAFTA or the WTO. . . .

There is an emergent set of global regulatory authorities, but they are stunningly undemocratic. . . . If the Federal Reserve operates domestically at one remove from democratic accountability, the IMF and the World Bank operate at two removes. The World Trade Organization, as Howard Wachtel observes, adjudicates fair play for investors, but not for workers or citizens. Even worse, the WTO lacks the evolved rules of evidence, due process, public hearings, and the strictures against conflict of interest that characterize courts in mature democracies. . . .

The real issues, it seems to me, are these: What are the proper terms of engagement between a national, democratic polity and a global economy? As international institutions necessarily replace national ones, to whom are these institutions democratically accountable, and what substantive policies should they pursue?

—Robert Kuttner, *The American Prospect* (March-April 1998)

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The Logic of Covert Action

Bruce D. Berkowitz and Allan E. Goodman

FEW U.S. GOVERNMENT activities are as controversial as covert action. Americans may disagree about the specifics of trade policy or defense spending, but covert action is controversial to the core. Many covert operations, if carried out by different persons and under other circumstances, would be plainly and seriously criminal. The process for reviewing and approving such operations tests the limits of democracy. It is not surprising, therefore, that while some officials and pundits are firmly of the opinion that we need to maintain covert action as an option, others insist that the United States has no business carrying out such operations in any circumstances.

Because the United States and the Soviet Union are no longer competing in Third World proxy wars, the rationale for most traditional covert action has disappeared. However, new threats such as terrorism and proliferation may sometimes require the United States to consider going down that road. This is especially true in the Information Age. On the one hand, hostile parties will likely target our communications systems, computers, and data bases; and on the other, the United States will have the opportunity to enhance its security by using these technologies to its own advantage, possibly covertly.

Unfortunately, there are many indications that the United States is not adequately prepared to perform in this new context for covert action. Specifically:

- Most of the public, and many officials, apparently do not understand what covert action really is. As a result, they do not understand when it is effective, when it is not, and the costs that acting covertly imposes.
- Recent covert action failures suggest that as far as understanding the usefulness and limitations of covert action, ignorance extends to many U.S. officials.
- The effectiveness of U.S. intelligence oversight institutions within the legislative branch is questionable.

The Concept Defined

SHOULD the United States be prepared to carry out covert action? Is it ever necessary, or can we dispense with it completely?

During the Cold War, U.S. foreign policy officials often turned to covert action as a "middle option." Diplomatic pressure against an uncooperative, hostile power such as the Soviet Union was deemed ineffective. Military action, especially when the Soviets had overwhelming forces in Europe and (after 1949) the atomic bomb, was too risky. By default, then, covert action emerged as a prudent alternative to doing nothing. In the early years of

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the Cold War, too, U.S. leaders tended to think about covert action in terms of their World War II experience. The CIA's predecessor, the Office of Strategic Services, had run extensive commando raids and psychological operations during the war. While there were skeptics, many U.S. leaders thought that the OSS had been effective. As well as this precedent, after the war U.S. leaders became increasingly concerned about the Soviet Union's own covert operations, and most reasoned that the United States needed similar capabilities.

Unfortunately for the cause of conceptual clarity, "covert action" quickly became synonymous with the kinds of operations the United States carried out under this label during the Cold War—paramilitary operations, propaganda, political action, and the like. This has confused discussions about covert action ever since, because, essentially, covert action properly understood has less to do with the operations themselves than with how they are carried out.

Covert action is, plain and simple, *any activity in which the United States conceals its responsibility*. Because so many writers, pundits, and commentators fail to understand this, they never address the single most important question pertaining to the subject: When should an action be conducted covertly? Or to put it slightly differently, when and why should the United States act in a deniable fashion?

To underline this point, note that most of the operations that have been carried out as covert action in the past have also been carried out overtly in other situations. For example:

• *Paramilitary operations.* In the early 1960s the CIA covertly supported the anti-communist Hmong in Laos. In the 1980s the United States provided intermittent overt support to the Nicaraguan Contras.

• *Propaganda.* From their founding in the early 1950s through 1971, Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty were covertly funded by the CIA. Voice of America, which has a roughly similar function and has usually carried the same message, has always been overtly sponsored by the U.S. government.

• *Exerting political and economic influence.* In 1948 the CIA provided covert assistance to the Christian Democratic Party in the Italian national election. Today the National Endowment for Democracy provides overt U.S. assistance to pro-democracy organizations abroad.

• *Assassination.* The United States tried to kill Fidel Castro in the 1960s, with the CIA using mafia figures as surrogates. In 1986 the United States carried out an air strike against Libya in retaliation for a terrorist attack, specifically targeting the tent in which Muammar Qaddafi was known to sleep, and taking no great pains to hide the fact.

• *Coups.* In 1953 the CIA covertly fomented public demonstrations against the Mossadeq regime in Iran to assist the Shah to reclaim his throne. In 1986 the United States openly supported Corazon Aquino's "People Power" demonstrations against the regime of Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines.

In each of these examples the operations were similar, but some were conducted covertly and others not. The point is this: Americans may question whether the U.S. government should support coups, meddle in foreign elections, or kill foreign leaders, but the nature of these activities is a *separate* issue from whether the United States should carry them out covertly. Understanding that deniability is the single distinguishing feature of covert action is absolutely necessary if there is to be useful discussion of this topic. In its turn, deniability raises two crucial issues. First, when is covertness essential for the success of an operation? Second, what are the implications of deniable policies for a democratic government?

Why Deniability?

DURING THE COLD WAR and even today, U.S. officials have often paid more attention to the advantages of covertness than to its costs. Covertness seems to add flexibility because officials do not need to explain their policy to the public or to allies. It also entails review by fewer members of Congress and thus seems more expedient.

There is, however, a price to be paid for

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such benefits. There is always a cost when other governments and the public ultimately find out that they have been left out of the loop. They may voice approval of an operation after the fact, but whether they admit it or not, those who were misled or not informed will trust the U.S. government less from then on. Sometimes the benefits outweigh the loss of trust, but no one should fool himself into thinking that this cost is zero. It never is.

There are other costs. Many of the benefits of the Information Revolution are a result of our ability to use fluid, networked, open organizations. Networks allow people to exchange ideas and information more easily. This increases creativity. Networks also improve the opportunity for scrutiny by outsiders, and are better at drawing on new talent and ideas as needed. Covert action has the opposite effect. By its very nature, covert action limits the number of people and organizations who can contribute to an operation, or participate in a sanity check with regard to it.

There are only two legitimate reasons for carrying out an operation covertly rather than overtly. One is when open knowledge of U.S. responsibility would make an operation infeasible. For example, if Italian voters had known that the CIA was financing the Christian Democratic Party in 1948, the Communists would have successfully painted the Christian Democrats as U.S. lackeys, and CIA support would have backfired. If an operation is at all feasible without such deniability, the argument for covertness is much harder—and often impossible—to make.

The other valid reason for carrying out an operation covertly is to avoid retaliation or to control the potential for escalation. The fact that such covertness is sometimes no more than a fig leaf does not necessarily alter the fact that it is a useful fig leaf. In the late 1940s, for example, the Soviet government knew that the CIA was supporting resistance fighters in the Ukraine, since Soviet intelligence had penetrated most of the groups. Similarly, the Soviet leadership knew that the United States was supporting the Afghan *mujaheddin* in the 1980s. If U.S. leaders had admitted responsibility, Soviet leaders would have felt it necessary to retaliate, as was the case when President Eisenhower owned up to U-2 overflights in 1960, with the result that Khrushchev felt compelled to cancel the Paris summit meeting. Also in the case of Afghanistan, the Soviet Union could have struck at U.S. allies, perhaps with military action. Pakistan provided a base for the U.S. covert action in Afghanistan. Arab countries such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia provided arms and materiel. All of these countries wanted to avoid a direct confrontation with the Soviet Union, and covertness helped persuade them that they could do so.

The goal of averting retaliation is important when deciding whether to carry out an operation covertly. If covertness will not avert retaliation (or if openness will not attract it), much of the rationale for covert action disappears.

A Matter of Accountability

MANY CONTROVERSIAL activities that have been undertaken as "covert action"—assassination attempts (currently illegal), attempts at influencing democratic elections abroad, support for corrupt dictators as lesser evils—would have been controversial even had they been carried out overtly. It was not the covertness of the actions that was at issue but the actions themselves. The special problem that covert action presents, rather, has to do with accountability: How can one carry out covert action and still ensure that officials are held responsible for their decisions?

The main formal control that exists today is undertaken through Congress, and this has turned out to be a problem. Congress itself deserves much of the blame for the breakdown in the accountability of covert action. This, in essence, is what happened: Following lengthy and detailed investigations of the intelligence community in the 1970s, Congress demanded a greater role in the review of covert action. These provisions were

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eventually embodied in the Intelligence Oversight Act of 1980, the current statute under which Congress monitors the intelligence community. Under the act, which is still in force, the U.S. government can still hide responsibility for a covert action from the public-at-large, but to do so the president must notify in a secret "finding" the relevant intelligence oversight committees—namely the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence and the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence—whenever he approves such an operation.

Many critics have objected to this process, claiming that limiting oversight to a small group of representatives that works in secret is undemocratic. But the oversight process for covert action is wholly consistent with other departures from pure democratic rule that most people accept. After all, many institutions limit participation in the American democratic system, including the Supreme Court and the committee system in Congress. The government also operates in secret, for example, when shield laws prohibit the disclosure of certain witnesses or defendants in court proceedings. Congress also routinely reviews spending for classified weapons systems secretly.

Clearly, government could not function if everyone took part in every decision, and it could not function without some secrets. The real questions are whether officials are, at some point, held accountable for their decisions (if not for specific actions, then for general policy); whether there is sufficient rotation among officials, so that covert action policies are not decided by a static elite group; and whether the process ensures timely accountability for extreme abuses, so that policies can be re-examined before something really awful happens. The Intelligence Oversight Act and the House and Senate intelligence committees, as structured, meet all these criteria. The problem is that the act was weakened by the Iran-Contra affair and was never fixed. As the effects are with us still, it is worth reviewing what happened on that occasion in some detail.

MOST AMERICANS RECALL the basics of the Iran-Contra fiasco and the controversy that followed. Late in 1985, National Security Council staff officials, with the assistance of CIA officers and the support of Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) William Casey, developed a plan to trade weapons for U.S. hostages held by Iranian-backed terrorists in Lebanon. These officials did not tell Congress about the plan. The operation careened along until November 1986, when a Beirut newspaper disclosed the arms-for-hostages scheme. The House and Senate appointed a joint committee to investigate. But instead of exposing the project as the hare-brained lunacy it was, the proceedings had exactly the opposite effect, turning quickly into a public relations disaster for Congress and leading much of the public to doubt whether that institution had the capability to oversee covert action. Then matters got worse.

In 1991, after the Iran-Contra hearings concluded, the intelligence oversight committees drafted new legislation aimed at preventing future administrations from hiding covert action from Congress. Unfortunately, the committees allowed themselves to get sidetracked. The key issues were *whether* the president needed to notify Congress, and *whom* in Congress he needed to notify. Instead of addressing these issues, the oversight committees became preoccupied with a secondary question: How long and under what conditions could the president delay notification?

How did this happen? When, back in 1986, President Reagan and his advisers decided not to notify Congress, Casey had asked the CIA's General Counsel Stanley Sporkin (now a federal judge) to provide a rationale. In response, Sporkin cited a provision in the 1980 oversight act that allowed the president to defer notification. The provision was originally intended to deal with fast-breaking, urgent situations, not to protect especially delicate but non-time sensitive operations. Besides, the Intelligence Oversight Act—duly

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passed by Congress and signed into law by President Carter—had a specific mechanism for dealing with sensitive situations. If the president believed that an operation was too sensitive to share with the thirty-odd members of the two oversight committees, he could consult with the so-called "Gang of Eight"—that is, the two party leaders of each house, and the chairmen and vice-chairmen of the House and Senate committees.

Until Iran-Contra, no one had ever presumed that the president could delay notifying Congress because a covert action was too sensitive. When executive branch officials originally made the Sporkin argument that they could defer notification to protect sensitive operations, Congress should have simply told them that the loophole was bogus. Instead, the committees effectively bought Sporkin's basic argument and began bargaining with the White House over the details during the next several years. The committees wanted a 48-hour deadline for notification, and in 1991 Congress included the necessary language in the annual intelligence authorization bill.[1] President Bush vetoed the bill and Congress backed down. In effect, then, Congress conceded that there was no limit to how long the president could defer notification. And because Congress implicitly accepted the Sporkin argument, the president was no longer obliged to use the "Gang of Eight" mechanism, either.

If the oversight committees had been serious about enforcing the Intelligence Oversight Act, they could have simply refused to authorize *all* covert action. Alternatively, they could have eliminated the CIA's special contingency fund for covert operations, requested the appropriations committee to cut intelligence spending, or deferred indefinitely the appointment of any intelligence official requiring Senate confirmation. Instead, the combination of Sporkin's brief and Congress' mishandling of the issue gutted the legal basis for oversight of covert action.

Every DCI appointed since Iran-Contra has promised the oversight committees that he would promptly notify Congress of covert actions. Of course, the DCI also promises to serve the president faithfully. Do we really want to wait to see which of these conflicting commitments proves strongest in a crunch? That is precisely the nature of the potential train wreck that lies ahead.

Covert Action and Strategy

DESPITE THE potential costs of such a debacle, the larger problem for covert action during the Clinton administration has not been notification and control. Rather, it has been bad strategic thinking.

In a memorable *New Yorker* cartoon, two scientists are standing in front of a blackboard, the left third of which is covered with complicated equations and formulae. The right third is filled with similar hieroglyphics. The middle third, however, shows a giant arrow running left to right, explaining the process with the annotation, "THEN A MIRACLE OCCURS." One scientist is saying to the other, "I have some reservations about your methodology."

Recent covert operations suggest that U.S. officials are using a similar methodology. They seem to conceive of covert action as a quick fix that can magically solve problems when all else fails. In reality, covert action works like any other foreign policy activity, and poorly conceived operations fail whether they are covert or not. Like all other policies, covert action requires a clear set of objectives, an accurate understanding of the prevailing conditions, and clear logic on how the operation will achieve goals. In terms of the Clinton administration's failure, the CIA's recent overt operation in Iraq is Exhibit A.

According to various press reports, the CIA ran a Cold War-style operation against the Iraqi Ba'ath regime in various forms from

[1]See Public Law 102-88, August 14, 1991, 102nd Congress. Also see the Conference Committee Report, *Intelligence Authorization Act, Fiscal Year 1991* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, July 25, 1991).

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1992 to 1996.[2] The goal was to eliminate Saddam Hussein by encouraging a military coup, in part by reducing drastically Saddam's control over Iraq's outlying regions—in particular, Iraqi Kurdistan.

Kurdish nationalists in northern Iraq rebelled at the end of Desert Storm in early March 1991, when Saddam's hold on power seemed to be weakening. Surviving Iraqi army units rallied to quash the rebellion. Kurds fled their cities for the mountains. With a potential refugee disaster looming, the United Nations imposed a "no fly zone" in the northern third of Iraq and provided food and supplies to the Kurds. As a result, beginning in March 1991 the Iraqi Kurds gained substantial autonomy. It was also in 1991, during the Bush administration, that the United States began its covert effort to eliminate Saddam. At the time, U.S. officials, believing that Saddam was weak and that his opponents would soon succeed in removing him, saw no need to move quickly. Press reports suggest that this plan was gradually expanded during the year before Bill Clinton took office. The strategy was to isolate, marginalize, and weaken Saddam by increasing the autonomy the Kurds enjoyed in the UN-protected areas.

Saddam was indeed weakened, but not enough to bring him down. Reflecting frustration that Saddam still endured—and that he could still cause plenty of trouble, as with his chilling October 1994 military feint toward Kuwait—the character of the operation was changed in 1995-96 to achieve faster results. Sources report that President Clinton signed an order to provide arms and other assistance to Iraqi groups seeking to overthrow Saddam. Other sources add that some members of Congress also wanted the CIA to take stronger action to that end. The CIA reportedly supported two kinds of anti-Saddam initiatives during this period. One was an effort to broadcast propaganda from Jordan into Iraq by expatriate opposition organizations. The other was a more aggressive campaign involving the use of force. This second effort embraced Iraqi military officers opposed to Saddam, and two Kurdish nationalist groups: the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK).

These CIA initiatives began to unravel in June 1996. Saddam had penetrated the cabal of military officers plotting against him early on and quickly foiled their plans. Then in late August, the operation fell victim to internal Kurd rivalry. The KDP leader, Masoud Barzani, turned against the PUK, inviting the Iraqi government to send its forces into the Kurdish territories, where they crushed the opposition. The CIA operation was routed. Iraqi authorities captured dozens of agents who had been working for the CIA, as well as computers and communications equipment that the United States had supplied them.

Few Americans paid much attention to the collapse of the operation and it was soon drowned out in the media by the 1996 presidential elections. Not many U.S. personnel were involved, and as there was little television footage available, the media quickly moved on to new topics. But there should be no mistake—the covert operation in Northern Iraq

[2]The following account is based on press reports and public testimony by U.S. officials. See in particular Jim Hoagland, "How CIA's Secret War on Saddam Collapsed", *Washington Post*, June 26, 1997. Also see Tim Weiner, "Iraqi Offensive Disrupts Plot to Oust Saddam Hussein", *Washington Post*, September 7, 1996; Robin Wright, "Hussein Torpedoes CIA Plot Against Him, Officials Say", *Los Angeles Times*, September 8, 1996; and R. Jeffrey Smith, "CIA-Backed Iraqi Dissidents Killed", *Washington Post*, September 10, 1996. Much of Hoagland's account was based on interviews with Warren Marik, a retired CIA case officer who had participated in the operation. The CIA later asked the Justice Department to investigate Marik's disclosure. See Walter Pincus, "Justice Asked to Investigate Leaks by CIA Ex-Officer", *Washington Post*, July 19, 1997.

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was a huge disaster, possibly the greatest covert action debacle since Vietnam. All that was missing were helicopters evacuating U.S. agents and allies from rooftops. According to the press, more than one hundred Iraqi dissidents and military officers cooperating with the United States were executed when Iraqi intelligence forces rolled up the operation. Saddam also gained invaluable information on U.S. intelligence tradecraft and the organization of his opposition.

The United States suffered an enormous political setback. Having relied on covert action because it was unwilling to confront Iraq overtly, America appeared weak as well as naive in the wake of the operation's failure. This failure doubtlessly contributed to the subsequent decisions by Saudi Arabia and other states in the region to distance themselves from Washington and to hedge in their relations with Iraq. It may also explain in part Saudi Arabia's reluctance to confront Iran over the June 1996 bombing of the Khobar Towers in Dharan, which left nineteen Americans dead. As for Saddam, having sized up his opponents and weakened its coalition, it was reasonable for him to raise the stakes. The covert action fiasco was probably a major factor in Saddam's decision to confront the United States and its allies in late October and November 1997, when Iraq demanded the ouster of the Americans among the UN weapons inspectors and an end to economic sanctions.

Most important of all, the CIA's disastrous Iraq operation suggests how poorly U.S. officials understand the problems entailed in covert action and how to use such actions effectively. The U.S. effort in Iraqi Kurdistan, as planned and executed after 1993, was a textbook example of bad strategy and bad policy. It is hard to think of how a program could have been more poorly conceived. It failed on at least three different counts:

***Failure #1**: Poor strategic concept.* The objective of the program was to remove Saddam as a threat, yet all of the dynamics of the situation favored Saddam. The United States was inherently limited in the amount of support it could provide the Kurds. There are few locales more remote from the United States than Kurdistan. The region is virtually surrounded by Iran, Syria, and Iraq—all sworn enemies of the United States. The only access is through Turkey, which, as we shall see momentarily, presents its own problems. By 1996, the coalition that had liberated Kuwait five years earlier had frayed badly, and it had been difficult even to maintain support for continuing UN economic sanctions on Iraq. Even more important, the Kurds themselves were known to be badly split. The KDP and PUK were *rivals*. Each was susceptible to an offer that would allow it to prevail over its ostensible partner; the only question was the price and timing of such an offer.

These factors ensured Iraq the dominant position as events unfolded. As one opportunity after another presented itself, Iraq could progressively ratchet the two Kurdish factions apart. Supporters of the operation claim that the United States, with just a little more money, might have held the Kurdish resistance together in the summer of 1996. Maybe, maybe not. In any case Saddam would only have needed to wait for another opportunity to peel off one of the factions, and such an opportunity would have inevitably occurred.

***Failure #2**: Geopolitical simple-mindedness.* Even if the Kurdish operation had succeeded, it would have been inimical to other U.S. interests in the region. The plan to increase the autonomy of the Kurds, creating a de facto Kurdish state, was inconsistent with broader U.S. policy toward Turkey, which strenuously opposes the creation of an independent Kurdish state along its borders.

Moreover, if the covert operation had succeeded, its net result would have been a permanently weaker Iraq. But most experts agree that Iran, not Iraq, is the greater long-term concern in the region. This is precisely why the United States limited the objectives of Desert Storm to liberating Kuwait; U.S. leaders believed that a viable united Iraq was necessary to counterbalance Iran. If a Kurdish rebellion had succeeded in weakening the regime in

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Baghdad, we would have also created a power vacuum in the region, and dealing with Iran would have been more difficult than ever.

***Failure #3**: Deniability never made sense.* The United States was never able to keep the Iraq operation deniable. The program was thoroughly compromised from the start. Kurdish leaders talked freely to the press. More significantly, though, it is not even clear why deniability was necessary.

The objective of the operation was to eliminate Saddam, and U.S. officials acknowledged that there was a good probability that Saddam would be killed in the process. The only reason for keeping the operation covert would have been to preclude Iraq from striking back at the United States or its allies. But after the Gulf War Saddam was *already* determined to strike, no matter what the United States did. Iraq continues to develop weapons of mass destruction, intimidate its neighbors, and support terrorism (including a 1993 assassination attempt against former President Bush). In short, whether Saddam had evidence of U.S. involvement in a coup was essentially irrelevant. Covertness offered few advantages.

With so many flaws, how was such a poorly conceived plan able to proceed? Some critics claim that electoral politics played a part, arguing that several administration officials wanted to get rid of Saddam before the 1996 presidential election. These claims are difficult to prove. One thing is clear, however: No one in the approval chain—especially in 1995-96—had the experience, stature, or inclination to recognize a hopelessly misconceived policy and kill the program before it was too late.

It is ironic. Iran-Contra was a half-baked scheme that captured America's attention for almost a year, and dominated discussions over U.S. intelligence policy for several years after that. However, no one was killed in the Iran-Contra operation, it had little long-term effect on U.S.-Iranian relations, and had even less effect on the balance of power in the Persian Gulf. In contrast, according to reports, the program to support the Iraqi Kurds resulted in more than a hundred deaths, undercut U.S. credibility in a critical region, and cost about $100 million. And yet, apparently, no one responsible for the program has had to account for the consequences of this disaster.

Into the Information Age

THE FAILURE of the administration's covert operations in Iraq is troubling. U.S. leaders need to understand how to evaluate proposals for covert action and, when necessary, carry out such operations effectively. For while paramilitary operations and coups are probably relics of the Cold War, the issue of covert action may soon become more important than ever.

During the mid-1990s, a new buzz phrase entered national security conversations: "information warfare." Information warfare (in the inevitable acronym of the national security community, "IW") refers to the use of, or attacks on, information systems—computers, communications networks, or databases—for military or political advantage. Because information systems are critical to both military operations and the civilian economy, they are prime targets for disruption and destruction. IW is the dark side of the Information Age.

U.S. officials are reluctant to discuss the use of information warfare *by* the United States. They are, however, willing to talk freely about the IW threat *against* the United States.[3] Some examples of the scenarios they describe include the following:

- The United States buys many of the electronic components for its weapons systems

[3]See, for example, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Technology, *Report of The Defense Science Board Task Force on Information Warfare-Defense* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, January 1997). Also see Bruce D. Berkowitz, "Warfare in the Information Age", *Issues in Science and Technology* (Fall 1995); and John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, eds., *In Athens's Camp: Preparing for Conflict in the Information Age* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corp., 1997).

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from foreign countries. Since some of these countries would prefer that the United States stay out of their regions and refrain from criticizing their human rights records, it follows that they could build "bugs" into the components they sell so that, in the event of war, U.S. smart weapons would suddenly become dumb and unable to find or hit their targets.

• A U.S. software company is about to release a new product that could give it a major competitive advantage. A foreign intelligence service, hoping to protect the market share of software companies in its own country, plants sophisticated disinformation on Internet "chat groups" and web sites, suggesting that early versions of the new U.S. product are unreliable and can fail with catastrophic effects.

• Modern infrastructure—rail, electric power, hospitals, and air traffic control—are all controlled by computer systems. Unfriendly forces create chaos and destruction by penetrating these systems. In wartime, they cripple the deployment of U.S. forces that depend on the commercial infrastructure.

Other scenarios easily come to mind. IW strikes can be tactical (e.g., jamming a specific communications link or impersonating a particular terrorist group) or strategic (e.g., planting disinformation to lead hostile researchers down a technological cul-de-sac).

Although U.S. officials usually discuss such operations in terms of the threat they present to the United States, it does not take a genius to figure out that we could easily do the same to others. Indeed, the United States has a large potential advantage in information warfare. American-based companies dominate the computer, software, communications, and broadcast industries. We have the access and the expertise. If anyone is in a position to use IW to its advantage, it is the U.S. military and intelligence community.

IW is likely to be most effective when the target does not know the identity of the attacker—the disguised hacker, the unannounced penetrator, the anonymous source of bogus information. In other words, much information warfare will be covert action. So at the very moment when Cold War-style covert operations are becoming discredited and passé, a new potential form has appeared. And this is why the mishandling of covert operations in Iraq and elsewhere is so disturbing. If U.S. leaders were so inept with the old covert options, how can we expect them to understand both the potential and the limitations of exotic new ones?

This is also why the reluctance of U.S. officials to discuss policy and planning for offensive information warfare is worrisome. Without public debate, we cannot develop a national consensus or policy on major issues. Consider, finally, these questions:

° What are the capabilities that U.S. military forces and intelligence organizations must develop in order to use IW effectively and, when necessary, covertly? What are the strengths and weaknesses of these capabilities? Can they reduce the need for conventional military forces and military operations? Under what conditions?

◦ Can the United States develop these capabilities without exposing itself and its allies to the threat of retaliation?

◦ Which, if any, potential IW targets should be off limits?

◦ The private sector's role in communications, computers, the media, and technology development is larger than that of the government, and growing more so. How can government organizations work with industry to maintain the U.S. edge in IW?

◦ Do U.S. defense and intelligence officials have an adequate understanding of strategy and tactics for information warfare?

◦ Do we have the laws, expertise, and institutions necessary to oversee this new potential form of covert action?

This discussion needs to be carried out in public. Although we need to protect the details of our plans and capabilities, we can and must discuss general principles in the open. If we do not, we are bound to repeat the mistakes in oversight, accountability, and effectiveness that have plagued covert action in the past. □

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Running Out of Gas

*This Time the Wolf **is** Coming*

C.J. Campbell

IN THE NOT-YET-NAMED era in which we now live beyond the Cold War, a philosophically edged disagreement has arisen among our literati and social seers as to just how dangerous the world really is. Much of the discussion seems to turn on temperament or historic intuition rather than evidence. But of all the dangers cited by the more pessimistic among us—unconventional weapons proliferation, clashes of civilizations, global warming and environmental despoliation, rampant ethno-nationalism, and the rest—one almost never hears of the possibility of a major, world-wrenching energy crisis. And yet such a difficulty is at least as likely as any of these other would-be terrors. Given the false alarms that have been raised in the past, this assertion is certain to be received with considerable skepticism. It is an assertion I intend to justify in what follows.

The world is using up its geological endowment of oil at a prodigious rate, and that rate will increase as newly wealthy countries, particularly in Asia, enter the industrial phase of economic growth—as indeed they will, recent hiccoughs notwithstanding. At the same time, and despite astounding advances in the science of geology and in techniques of finding fossil fuel deposits, discovery rates of new oil reserves are falling sharply. For every four barrels used, only one is found. The lines of discovery, consumption, and extraction are bearing down on one another and will inevitably cross, probably in the year 2003; at that point, the world will pass its peak production of oil, meaning that more than half of the world's finite supply of conventional oil will have been extracted and consumed. When that happens—and 2003 is only five years away—both the developed and developing countries of the world will increasingly be faced with politically difficult and, ultimately, hugely expensive problems of adjustment. The international political problems facing the United States will be shaped in particular by the fact that as the world proceeds down the slope of oil production, five Middle Eastern countries will increasingly gain relative share. The last time that happened, in the 1970s when their share was about 36 percent, there was, in point of fact, hell to pay. Soon—in all probability by the year 2000—that share will stand at around 30 percent.

Before proceeding to show why we will soon come to and pass peak production and to suggest what the implications may be, we might ask why it is that so few people seem concerned about the energy balance. Two mutually reinforcing reasons come to mind: one broadly historical, the other having to do with political psychology.

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The Déjà Vu Factor

The first reason not to worry is that we are thought to have already

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"been there and done that." The oil shocks of the 1970s, which had profound if temporary economic consequences and alerted the world to the issue of resource depletion—as embodied, for example, in the pronouncements of the Club of Rome—are widely considered to have been assimilated and put to rest. All things considered, the energy crisis turned out to be short-lived and, as Americans even remotely educated in the matter know, the price of gasoline at the pump is no higher today, adjusted for inflation, than it was before 1973.

Common wisdom has it, too, that the shocks were largely artificial, by which most people mean politically induced. There is much truth in this. In 1973 certain Arab oil-producing countries restricted the sale of oil for a few weeks as an economic weapon in the Yom Kippur War, and prices escalated five-fold. During 1978-79 the fall of the Shah prompted panic buying that drove prices briefly to almost $50 a barrel. But as politics can turn sour, so can they turn sweet. Saudi Arabia's economic and political interests have largely coincided with those of the United States since the late 1970s. As the major swing producer, with large reserves and excess capacity, the Saudis have helped push the price down and keep it down for most of the last fifteen years. Meanwhile, the likelihood of another Arab-Israeli war on the scale of 1973—providing a pretext for another embargo—has been rendered remote by the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty of 1979 and further achievements in the peace process since then. Even the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq War, it is often noted, failed to have a major influence on oil production and export despite the fact that the battlefield was literally only an artillery barrage away from major oil terminals and facilities.

A form of economic common knowledge has reinforced the complacency afforded by these broadly political observations. As everyone knows, new industrial efficiencies and efforts at conservation have helped ease the energy problem for the longer term, and many believe that a shift away from old-fashioned industrialism in much of the world will reduce even further the ratio of energy input to productive output. There have been significant new discoveries of oil since 1973, too. Many prominent economists have therefore come to act as though the world's oil endowment is effectively infinite.[1] When the world runs low on "conventional" oil—that is to say, easily recoverable oil—it is assumed that price signals will stimulate efforts to recover more expensive reserves. Those same price signals, in turn, will stimulate research and development into other energy sources and into technologies that can lower the price of non-conventional fossil fuel recovery—for example, the process of extracting oil from tarsands and shale. The alarmist view aired during the 1970s, that the world was running out of oil, is now dismissed by most economists and many laymen alike as having been quite silly—an almost perfect example of creating a scare by crying wolf. And in a way it was; in the 1970s the world had used no more than about 20 percent of its conventional oil endowment.

Prevention is Harder than Cure

HUMAN PSYCHOLOGY mixes with the logic of democratic politics to produce the second reason for downplaying energy issues: namely, that it is much easier to react to a diplomatic crisis or a socio-economic discontinuity than it is to prepare for one. If government analysts were to predict an oil crisis or a market convulsion leading to a doubling of price within three or four years, then the governments for whom those analysts labor would be forced either to reject expert advice or to make painful choices about how to cope. It is much easier to ignore the advice,

[1]See, for example, M.A. Adelman and M.C. Lynch, "Fixed View of Resource Limits Creates Undue Pessimism", *Oil & Gas Journal*, April 7, 1997; and P.R. Odell, "World Oil Resources, Reserves and Production", *The Energy Journal*, 1994, vol. 15.

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or, better still, to ensure that one never hears it. One may then treat the crisis, when it comes, as an act of God or some other unpreventable occurrence, and—a crucial determinant of behavior in democratic politics—with any luck at all, it will all come crashing down on someone else's watch.

Western governments have, in fact, gone out of their way not to know what the position is regarding the future of oil supplies. Let an anecdote illustrate the point.

I live in a remote village in France called Milhac. It is so remote that most Frenchmen have never heard of it, let alone visited it. And yet last May I had a visitation from the International Energy Agency (IEA), an arm of the OECD set up in 1974 in the wake of the first oil shock. It seems that the IEA had taken an interest in my writings about oil depletion and, not having anyone on their 150-strong staff who has addressed the issue of the fundamental resource constraints, the mountain, so to speak, came to me in Milhac. It soon became evident that, in the two decades of their existence, they had not even begun to study the related issues of oil endowment, consumption, and discovery trends in any depth. Only in a transnational bureaucracy completely protected from the pressures of reality could such a thing happen. For more than twenty years they have instead simply accepted published reports on existing and probable reserves at face value, even though, as I show below, there are plentiful reasons for doubting their accuracy. Made up mostly of economists, the IEA relies for intelligence on short-term forecasts of supply and demand, and does little to evaluate the underlying resource base. The United States and most West European governments, in turn, rely on the IEA for many of their basic estimates.[2] As William A. Weingarten, director of the Office of International Energy and Commodities at the U.S. Department of State, explained to me, "We believe . . . that the price signals generated by an efficient world energy market will be important in making the transition and we are working with other members of the IEA to try to improve the information available to market participants."

Yes, the oracle of the market does speak, but what it says is of limited use for longer term planning. The oil market tends to fluctuate in response to short-term cues; the current fall in prices, for example, reflects short-term oil stocks' movements and hedging based on warm weather, the Kyoto conference, and the Asian economic collapse. The fall is excessive. And since the market is highly efficient but short term, it will probably overreact in the opposite direction when true shortages recur, thereby exacerbating the resultant price escalation, just as was the case in 1974 and 1978-79.

The general complacency that flows from these two elements of the situation—earlier unjustified panic of the 1970s and the democratic propensity not to hear unwanted news—is reinforced by yet another: namely, that, on the surface and in the relative short-run, the conventional factors that determine the world energy balance look relatively benign. The oil-rich Arab states are running short of cash and will increase their production. A slowdown in Asian growth may dampen demand and also prices. The economic growth that has been occurring in much of East Asia and that may be anticipated in Russia and other former European communist countries is concentrated in industries that are not particularly energy-intensive—and much of Eastern Europe's old energy-wasting industry is shutting down. It may be, too, that the fears of global warming (whether justified or not is a separate matter) will translate into reduced fossil fuel consumption and, therefore, lower demand pressure on price. As with Joseph's interpretation of Pharaoh's dream, the world may indeed have seven or so good years ahead. If so, this will

[2]Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, and Japan are among the governments that have purchased the analyses in which I have been engaged over the past two decades—as well as several international oil companies. But not the IEA, the United States, or any of the countries of Western Europe.

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only make the bad years that will follow seem all the more shocking and difficult to bear.

Not Production, But Extraction

FOR MOST OF this century, the world has relied primarily upon an abundant supply of cheap oil to drive its economy. It is difficult to think of any aspect of modern life, from transport to agriculture, that does not depend upon it. Its depletion is therefore an immensely important subject. The beginning of wisdom concerning this subject is that, despite standard usage, we do not *produce* oil, we *extract* it. This circumstance alone implies certain immutable facts about the situation at hand and, given the reluctance to face those facts, it is necessary to repeat them in brief.

Oil comes mainly from the decomposition of algae and is preserved at the bottom of stagnant lakes and marine troughs under certain conditions of pressure and heat. Gas comes from plant remains. As the organic material is buried, it is at a critical point converted by chemical reactions into oil and gas. It then migrates through the rocks to fill such geological reservoirs and traps as may be physically reached. The conditions for the formation and preservation of oil occurred only very rarely in time and place in the earth's geological history. Much oil that was once trapped has since leaked away. One of the factors responsible for the abundance of oil in the Middle East is the widespread occurrence of salt, an excellent seal, above the reservoirs.

Almost all the oil produced to date, as well as what waits to be produced over the next twenty years or so, can be described as *conventional.* Conventional oil is that which flows at high rates and in good quality, much of it from giant fields found long ago. Ninety percent of oil produced today comes from fields more than twenty years old, and seventy percent from fields more than thirty years old. This is the kind of oil we know most about, and it has been responsible for the supply to which we have grown accustomed.

There is also non-conventional oil. It comprises the heavy oil and tarsand deposits of western Canada, Venezuela, and Siberia; oil from enhanced recovery achieved by changing the characteristics of the oil in the reservoir through steam injection and other methods; oil in hostile environments; oil in small accumulations; and oil of poor quality. The essential characteristic of all these types of non-conventional oil is that they are difficult and slow to produce. They may also be expensive to transport or refine.

We need to know how much conventional oil there is left and when its production will peak. Oil being a finite resource, production starts at zero and ends at zero. It reaches peak somewhere in between, more or less coinciding with the midpoint of depletion, when half the total endowment has been extracted. To assess the total endowment, we need to know how much has been produced, how much remains to be produced from known fields, and how many new fields await discovery.

Oil & Gas Journal, the most widely used publication on the subject, reports that 807 billion barrels had been produced to the end of 1997, almost half of that since the shocks of the 1970s. Reported reserves in known fields are 1.020 trillion barrels, but, as shown below, there is good reason to reduce this estimate to about 830 billion barrels of median probability.[3] If these numbers are reasonably accurate, it means that approximately 1.635 trillion barrels have been discovered to date (produced + reserves). The graph on the following page, which documents the number of gallons of oil discovered per decade, shows that peak discovery occurred during the 1960s. Extrapolating this historical discovery pattern suggests a total endowment of about 1.8 trillion barrels, which is in line with the trend of some twenty-five published estimates over as many years, as well as with other analytical techniques. That means, in turn, that about 165 billion barrels remain to be found, and about 995 billion

[3] "Annual Production Report", *Oil & Gas Journal*, December 29, 1997.

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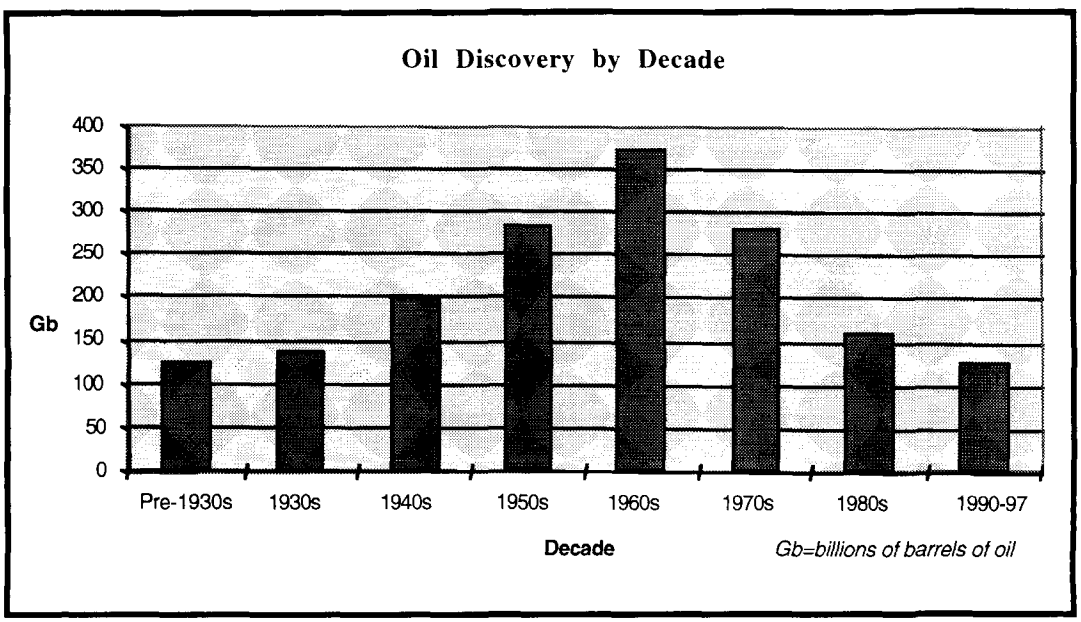
barrels remain to be produced.

This discovery plot makes a very compelling argument about the resource base of the earth's conventional oil. The discovery rate over the past thirty years has fallen, despite all the technological advances and the huge increase in knowledge gained from worldwide exploration. First came onshore exploration, which found the larger basins and most of the giant fields, which together hold some 70 percent of all known oil. Then offshore development was opened, effectively by the development of the semi-submersible rig in the 1960s. Discovery there, too, has now peaked. Attention is now turning to deep offshore deposits, but there are only a few deep-water areas that are geologically promising or indeed possible. To date, only about 25 billion barrels have been found in deep water—namely, about one year's world supply, and that from the more promising tracts. More can be expected, but not enough to defer peak by any significant period.

Some people have thought that great new possibilities for discovery would flow from the opening of the former Soviet Union after the fall of communism. It turns out, however, that Soviet explorers were as intelligent as their Western counterparts and were able to find the larger basins and most of the giant fields. Although they were working with rather primitive technology, it was not more primitive than that available to the West in those earlier years when most of its oil was found; after all, reserves in the Caspian area were discovered even before Colonel Drake drilled his famous well in Titusville, Pennsylvania in 1859.

In fact, too, the offshore extensions of this geologically productive area are well known and have been for many years. On the shores of the northern Caspian lies the giant but very difficult Tengiz Field, with reserves of about 8 billion barrels. There is some possibility that other similar finds may be made offshore, although there are doubts whether the critical salt seal is intact. There are also fears that the structures may contain gas and not oil. Additionally, there remain large, poorly known, and barely explored basins in the Siberian Arctic and offshore, but the extreme environment places such oil as they may contain in the non-conventional category. Apart from the resource constraints, doing business in the former Soviet Union has proved difficult for most foreign companies, so that even if its potential is greater than estimated, not much new oil is likely to find its way onto world markets for a long time to



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come. At best, Caspian oil will be of North Sea proportions—three years' world supply—and while this will help, it does not change the longer term picture very much.

In short, the world has now produced almost half of its geological endowment of conventional oil. The earth has now been so extensively explored that virtually all the prolific producing trends have been identified. Geophysical techniques have also improved radically so that it is possible to map in very great detail the traps for oil that occur within the productive areas. There is, it so happens, a natural geological polarity about oil, reflecting the rare conditions of its formation: it is either there in abundance or it is not there at all.

Measuring Up

UNFORTUNATELY, these advances have not been matched by accuracy in reporting the results. World statistics on production and reserves are becoming increasingly unreliable, and this contributes much to the capacity for complacency exercised by government officials, economists, and laymen alike. For example, published reports of production in 1995 (simply a matter of reading the meter) range from 60.48 (*OPEC Bulletin*) to 69.89 (*World Oil*) million barrels a day. The situation with respect to reserves is even worse; there are no universal definitions and there is no reliable audit. Huge unsubstantiated increases were announced in the late 1980s as various OPEC countries vied to increase their share of the agreed total OPEC global limit, this because national quotas are based partly on reserves. The size of oil accumulations in traps far underground cannot be measured directly, and the reserves they hold are no more than estimates subject to varying degrees of probability. What is reported ranges widely. Some is so-called *proved*, with, say, a 90 percent probability of accuracy; some is *proved and probable* with a 50 percent probability; and some is *proved and probable and possible*, with, say, a 10 percent probability. Summing numbers with different probability rankings gives statistically flawed results.[4] If one takes the trouble to convert the reported numbers to a 50 percent probability value, namely, the best estimate of what will actually be produced, then one has a firm basis for developing a depletion profile with which to determine peak. Such an estimate must also take into account the impact of foreseeable technological advances. When one does all this and does it properly, the numbers look much less robust than advertised.

There is nothing we can do to change the earth's natural endowment; there is something we can do about how that endowment is measured and reported. But a subject of such importance is a sensitive one, and many vested interests are involved. Both oil-producing countries and oil companies have various reasons either to overstate or understate proven reserves. While there is no shortage of estimates and forecasts, only a few can be described as knowledgeable and objective, and what those few reliable estimates make clear is this: In global terms, and recognizing the uncertainties deriving from unreliable reserve data, we can accept, at least as a strong working hypothesis, that there are about 995 billion barrels yet to be produced. Of this, about 17 percent is yet-to-find. Annual consumption stands at 24 billion barrels a year and rising, and contrasts with the current discovery rate of just over 5 billion barrels a year on a falling trend. On this basis, the midpoint of depletion and corresponding production peak will arrive when a further 93 billion barrels have been produced, which will be in *less than five years*.

The reaching of peak production is not in itself a disaster; obviously, the sky will not suddenly fall the morning after it occurs. Large old fields of conventional oil in the Middle East and elsewhere will continue to produce, and their capacities will not be affected as lines cross on a graph in the meta-world of geopetroleum analysis. Spot rates for

[4]See C.J. Campbell, "Better Understanding Urged for Rapidly Depleting Reserves", *Oil & Gas Journal*, April 7, 1997.

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oil will not suddenly and sharply rise, and the multi-year contracts that determine price for most crude oil sold in the world will continue to be determined by standard factors: artificially limited production, especially by swing producers in the Middle East; business considerations; and diplomatic sensibilities. But the world will have passed a point of no return that will ultimately have an impact on supply, and therefore on price. Market signals alone are not the only measure of human rationality, and, in the case of the oil market, parochial short-term interests may well take precedence over the longer term interests of oil producers and consumers alike.

The Thirty Percent Threshold

BUT THAT IS NOT the whole story. Equally as important as the size of the earth's total oil endowment is its geographical distribution, and here we must return to the Middle East, where the consequences of reaching peak production may announce themselves even sooner than the year 2003.

The oil shocks of the 1970s carried a particular message about the distribution of oil, demonstrating that a few richly endowed countries could exert a disproportionate control on supply. By 1973, after many years of steady increase, the share of world supply coming from just five Middle East countries—Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia—had risen to as much as 36 percent before falling off as new fields in the North Sea, Alaska, and elsewhere began to deliver growing supplies. These latter discoveries were made *before* the shocks and were not a response to them, as is often suggested, although it is true that high oil prices did prompt their more rapid development. By 1986, the Middle Eastern share of world production had fallen to 16 percent, and prices had fallen to a low of $6 a barrel. The price collapse was partly engineered by the United States, in cooperation with Saudi Arabia, as part of its policy to undermine the Soviet Union by economic means.[5]

Since then, however, an important change has occurred: *share from the five Middle Eastern countries has again begun to rise*, reaching 27 percent of world supply by 1996. This time, however, it will continue to rise because, as shown above, there are few if any new major oil provinces waiting to be discovered. Certainly, there is no prospect of major early-flush production from new giant fields, save perhaps the Caspian, an area obviously not free of serious political and contractual risks. Accordingly, we must ask: What will happen when Middle Eastern producers reach the critical threshold that will enable them to virtually set the price of oil? It is a more serious prospect than it was in the 1970s because it is not likely to be temporary this time. Nor has the question been made any less serious by the benign changes in Israeli-Arab relations since 1973. The Palestinian issue was never much more than a convenient pretext for oil-producing Arab Gulf states; remember, after all, that OPEC's charge on the pocketbooks of the Western world in 1974 was led by the Shah of Iran, whose country had quite cordial relations with Israel and an alliance with the United States.

About half of the world's conventional oil endowment that remains to be extracted lies in the five major Middle East oil countries listed above. On current trends, assuming a 2 percent annual increase in world demand, their share of world production will pass 30 percent by the year 2000, and that is the threshold that made possible the price shocks of the 1970s. No one knows what this may mean in terms of oil price, but it does not stretch the imagination to conclude that the scene for another radical increase will have been set by the turn of the century, and most certainly by a decade after that. Political motives for an increase may not be necessary—shortage alone might suffice. But in

[5]Peter Schweizer, *Victory* (Boston: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1994); and Richard V. Allen, "The Man Who Changed the Game Plan", *The National Interest* (Summer 1996).

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that part of the world, political factors should never be discounted, and the political and social fragility of Saudi Arabia, far and away the most significant producer, is reason for real concern.

A massive increase in price, were it to occur, would no doubt curb demand, especially in the developing world. This would most likely give rise to very volatile prices for about ten years, at the end of which the Middle East producers would be supplying as much as 50 percent of the world's oil, and would be close to their own midpoint production peak. Absent sharp declines in consumption, literal shortages will be inevitable a decade or two after that, as production of a finite resource starts its inevitable decline.[6]

Since these numbers are not and cannot be exact, there is some latitude in the timing and scale of the consequences—but the essential picture is clear enough, at least to those who are willing to look. Strangely, though, not many people are willing to look, being content instead with the bland pronouncements of the oil companies and the mistaken views of economists, who have difficulty accepting the very concept of depletion. Accordingly, energy policy to meet this historic discontinuity affecting the life-blood of the world economy is far from the top of most countries' agendas.

As I have argued, this complacency owes much to the widely held view that there is always a technological solution to scarcity and that more oil will be recovered from existing fields if price signals touched off by impending scarcities make it economically worthwhile. The industry has indeed recorded remarkable technological advance, its knowledge of oil geology has made huge progress, and no one has ever accused it of not understanding how to make a profit. But that is, paradoxically perhaps, really the point: The only way to reconcile these considerable achievements and the high level of worldwide exploration with the sharply falling discovery rate is that there is much less left to discover. On present well-founded trends, to find significantly more than is estimated here would take a very long time and require an astronomical number of wells. And even adding a hypothetical 500 billion barrels to the yet-to-find category would delay peak by only ten years at current and projected rates of consumption.

Remember, too, that most technology aims to increase production rate, and with it profit, without necessarily adding much in terms of reserves. To understand the reports that are made about the very real technological achievements we have lately seen, it is important to keep a sense of scale. For example, the North Sea, the largest new province found since the Second World War and one which relies heavily on high-technology for extraction, has a total endowment of some 60 billion barrels—enough to supply the world at current consumption rates for less than three years. That its production is about to peak is common to almost all studies, and new technology will not make much difference as to when precisely that peak occurs.

Non-conventional oil will undoubtedly make an increasingly important contribution after the peak production of conventional oil has passed, but due to the long lead time and the slow rate of extraction, it cannot impact peak production or the growing control of share by the Middle East's "big five." There is indeed great scope for new technological solutions to overcome the impending oil crisis, but they will have to be aimed at finding new ways to use less oil-based energy rather than in trying to find what is not there to be found.

MAN ARRIVED on the planet some two million years ago and lived sustainably on it until about 1850, when he numbered about one billion. Since then he has

[6]Of course, it is not out of the question that a major reduction in the demand for oil will come about over the next two decades as a result of qualitative changes in transportation technology. General Motors has recently made clear that automobile makers are nearing commerically viable alternatives to the internal combustion engine.

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multiplied six-fold and the growth in oil extraction has increased in direct proportion to it. Since oil has provided abundant cheap energy to sustain the human population increase—particularly over the past half century—it can hardly be doubted that the imminent peak of oil production will mark the beginning of a historic discontinuity that will change the world we know and the energy economics that drive it. We are not running out of oil, just out of the cheap abundant supply on which we have come to depend.

There are many long-term solutions to the problem engendered by the depletion of cheap oil in terms of renewable energy sources and, above all, of using less of the endowment we have. Our main concern, however, must be about the transition from the era of cheap oil to whatever replaces it, a transition that will bear with it many grave economic and political consequences. These cannot be avoided entirely, but they can be mitigated with a modicum of planning. A proper understanding of the resource base is critical to any sensible political response. But a proper understanding seems to be precisely what governments are lacking, and these days are laboring actively to avoid having. Fundamentally the problem is not the greed of a few politically recalcitrant Middle Eastern countries that were especially favored during the Jurassic period—something that in the last resort could be solved by sending in the Marines. Rather, it is the immutable physics of the reservoir. □

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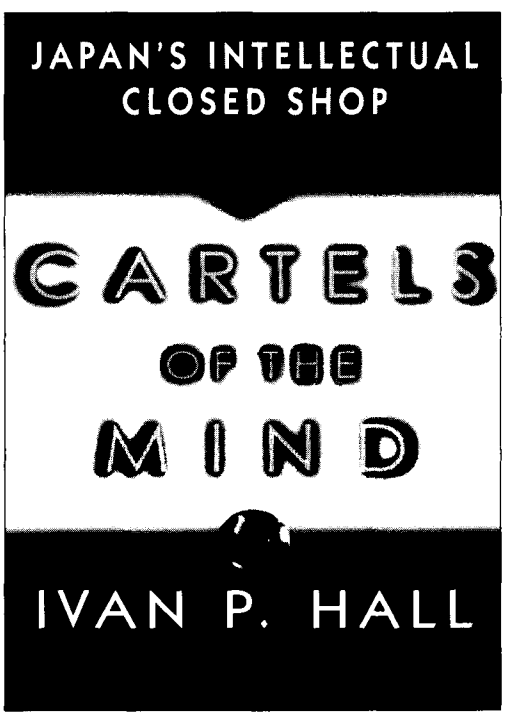

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The Road Not Taken

Hayek's Slippery Slope to Serfdom

Neil McInnes

THIS IS ANOTHER story about a book, a curious book that went from bestseller to oblivion and back several times over. The millions of copies it sold in a score of languages "completely discredited" its author, exactly as he foresaw it would. Although he was regarded as one of the leading theoretical economists of the century, the economists of the University of Chicago (whose university press had published the offending book) refused to have him on their faculty. No matter, by living to be over ninety he buried not only them but also the very notion of a planned economy, which had been the target of his essay. The book in question is Friedrich Hayek's *The Road to Serfdom*. Looking back to its publication fifty-four years ago one can easily see the reasons both for its enduring fame and for the discredit it brought on its author.

Published in the United States and Britain while the war against Nazi Germany was still raging, the book said that the democracies risked going the same way as Germany because their politicians and their intellectuals had fallen for the idea that an economy could be centrally planned, and they would soon be putting that idea into practice under the name of postwar reconstruction. In fact, Hayek said, central planning led, via cumulative attempts to mend its inevitable failures, to "a servile state" (he recalled Hilaire Belloc's 1913 book of that name). It led to serfdom, to a condition "scarcely distinguishable from slavery." Moreover, any attempt at getting a little bit pregnant in this domain, by toying with moderate planning and a "middle way" between capitalism and socialism, would set the democracies on a slippery slope that would end, more slowly but just as surely, in that same serfdom. The free market was not only more efficient economically but indispensable for political and cultural freedom. Its enemies were intellectuals, meddling politicians—and unbridled democracy, which is to say, oppression and spoilation by demagogues invoking the unrestricted will of the majority.

Hayek began by saying, "This is a political book." That is what economists say when they want to disarm criticism, and to be judged by looser standards. In fact, it was not a political book but a quite unpolitical one, in that it took no account of the political climate of the day—which happened to be a climate that would persist for the next thirty years, "*les trente glorieuses*", as they are now called. Schumpeter's review noted that it "takes surprisingly little account of the political structure of our time", and Eric Roll meant the same thing when he called it "a wholly unhistorical book." Still, Hayek was right to see that it contained enough politics, cut across enough academic demarcation lines, to outrage the economists—especially since most of them at the time were working for the government and taking its view of the economy.

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It would, he said, "damage my professional standing" and "alienate my colleagues." Indeed, it did: "After *The Road to Serfdom*, I felt that I had so discredited myself professionally I didn't want to give offense again. I wanted to be accepted in the scientific community." He never was: "I can feel it to the present day [1979]. Economists very largely tend to treat me as an outsider, somebody who had discredited himself by writing a book like *The Road to Serfdom*. . . . Some of my more leftish acquaintances (with considerable cheek) gave me to understand that in their opinion I had ceased to be a scientist and had become a propagandist."

Similar prejudice had almost prevented the book being published at all. Like Orwell's *Animal Farm* a few months later, and for comparable reasons, it was turned down by several publishers, one of whose readers said it was "unfit for publication by a reputable house." In the event, it was an instant popular success on both sides of the Atlantic and has been continuously in print in one or other of twenty languages ever since; there was a new French edition in 1993 and a fiftieth anniversary edition in English in 1994. Most readers probably knew it through a *Reader's Digest* condensation, prepared by Max Eastman, of which over one million copies were distributed through the American Book of the Month Club. Hayek got no money out of that version, for the University of Chicago gave it to the *Reader's Digest* for nothing. This led to accusations that the publication was being subsidized by Big Business, which it probably was.

THOUGH ALWAYS available, Hayek's ideas have been in and out of fashion to a degree unusual even in the modish subject of economics. He was Keynes' peer as a technical economist in the 1920s but he disappeared under "the Keynesian avalanche" of the 1930s. He resurfaced as a prophet in 1944 but thereafter fell to the rank of an intellectual outcast and hate figure whose new books, said Samuel Brittan, were greeted with scorn that constituted "an intellectual disgrace." The Nobel Prize of 1974 (which Hayek had to share with that arch-economic planner Gunnar Myrdal) prepared his resurrection as a cult figure of the Radical Right, supposedly influential in the counsels of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher. The collapse of communism was seen as vindicating his work and, more importantly, it produced a new generation of Hayekians among the economists of the former Soviet empire. In the West, however, he is now promised a new spell in oblivion by the communitarians and by all those who dismiss as mere "Cold War liberalism" the impressive achievement of Isaiah Berlin, Arthur Koestler, Karl Popper, and Friedrich Hayek. The last named would no doubt have taken this vicissitude as he took all the others, with the patient courtesy of the petty nobility of Austro-Hungarian Vienna.

Born there in 1899 into a family of academics on both sides, Hayek fought for the Habsburgs in the Great War as an airborne artillery spotter on the Italian front. In chaotic postwar Vienna he had Fabian sympathies until he came under the formidable influence of Ludwig von Mises, for whom he worked as a researcher after taking degrees in economics and law. His brilliance at theoretical economics induced Lionel (later Lord) Robbins to offer him a chair at the London School of Economics in 1931. His assignment was to take on Cambridge, from where Keynes reigned supreme. He did so, and if Keynes won the ensuing stoush, some economists are no longer sure he deserved to. Hayek moved to Chicago (not the economics department) in 1950, and later taught at Freiburg in Breisgau and Salzburg. He died in 1992, too far into dotage to appreciate that his ideas had won out in the Soviet Union. Those ideas had first been set before the public from the LSE, a school founded by the Webbs, where, after working for years under the administration of William Beveridge (father of Britain's welfare state) and alongside Harold Laski (chairman of the Labour Party), Hayek had produced *The Road to Serfdom*, an extraordinary solecism.

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THE WAY it came about helps to explain the book's odd mixture of sound theory and wild exaggeration. The LSE was evacuated to Cambridge when London was bombed, and Hayek found himself in quarters generously provided by Keynes, with very few students and fewer colleagues, because economists were called up for war duties. Hayek always said that working for the government corrupted economists, and in this case war service had won them over to planning, no doubt necessary for victory but which many now contemplated extending into peacetime. There was no danger of Hayek being called up because, although he had taken out British nationality in 1938, he was too recently an enemy alien to be trusted. After all, other refugee scholars had been rounded up and shipped on the infamous *Dunera* to concentration camps in Australia, and Popper was in New Zealand.

"I was in an extraordinarily privileged position", he said later. It produced in him the conviction that he was alone on the watch; all the other competent men were busy, economic questions had fallen into the hands of "amateurs and cranks", and a vast socialist conspiracy was afoot to hand free markets over to the planners. He wrote, said Samuel Brittan, "as if he were a voice crying in the wilderness, as if most of his friends were socialists, as if almost all intellectuals are socialists, as if socialism had become a kind of official religion."

There had indeed been, during the war, extensive regimentation of the economy and of much social and intellectual life. The Atlantic Charter had appealed to democracy's least enterprising, most servile inclinations by promising government-purveyed "freedom from want" and "freedom from fear", no doubt at the cost of vast new bureaucratic interventions. Beveridge had already produced his model for a welfare state, to which the Tories were as committed as the Labour Party—and which would be copied across Europe. A year before Hayek's book appeared, the Scottish philosopher John Anderson had anticipated many of its arguments in his article "The Servile State" (to be found in his *Studies in Empirical Philosophy*):

> It can scarcely be denied . . . that the capitalist countries are moving in the direction of regimentation and that the ideology of servility is rapidly gaining ground. The process has, of course, been greatly accelerated by the war. . . . The absurdity of the pretences of the advocates of a 'planned society' should be noted here. . . . There is no one who is competent to make provision for all departments and aspects of social life. . . . The expectation of such benefits [as the Atlantic Charter promised] is of course delusive; there is no system which can abolish insecurity and guarantee sufficiency. But, by the time that is realized, it will not be possible to have back for the asking the rights that have been surrendered in the name of solidarity.

Hayek's main ideas, stated in Anderson's more moderate form, were not unfamiliar in Britain, which is why his book was greeted there "along party lines." Labour MP Barbara Wootton wrote a courteous rebuttal (*Freedom Under Planning*) and LSE Fabian Herman Finer wrote one so discourteous (*Road to Reaction*) that Hayek threatened libel action. Churchill read the book during the 1945 election campaign and incautiously told electors that Labour would "bring in a Gestapo", which helped lose him the election. Chastened, he later told Hayek, "You are absolutely right, but that will never happen in Britain."

The book's reception in the United States was another matter, a tumult of acclaim and vituperation. An initial print run of 2,000 was followed the next week by 5,000 more, and then the million-odd condensations by Max Eastman. *The New Republic* said chambers of commerce were placing bulk orders to inflate demand. There were think pieces in the *New York Times* and *Fortune*, two contradictory reviews in one issue of the *American Economic Review*, an angry radio debate between Hayek and socialist academics, followed by a lecture tour to overflow audiences across the country that lasted three months. Hayek had hit the New Deal intellectuals on a raw nerve. Those

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of them ensconced in Washington to run the war economy hoped to stay there when capitalism, which had lurched from the Great Crash to war, fell into the expected hole of postwar deflation, which they were sure it would do unless it were planned into full employment. Hayek's assault on their ideal of rational social reconstruction, and the new heart it gave their opponents, caused panic. Milton Friedman said that, thanks to Hayek, libertarianism and capitalism had become intellectually defensible again. H. Stuart Hughes agreed in 1954: "The publication ten years ago of F.A. Hayek's *The Road to Serfdom* was a major event in the intellectual history of the United States . . . it marked the beginning of that slow reorientation of sentiment—both in academic circles and among the general public—toward a more positive evaluation of the capitalist system which has marked the past decade." Hayek assisted this reevaluation of capitalism by rejecting laisser faire in the very first pages of *The Road to Serfdom*, and saying that he favored government intervention for monetary, environmental, and anti-trust policies.

Translations into European languages began at once, but the German version (by Eva Röpke, Wilhelm's wife) published in Switzerland in 1945 met a curious fate. The four occupying powers in Germany had a deal to ban books hostile to any one of them. Hayek's book hardly mentioned the Soviet Union, taking Nazi Germany as the archetypal planned economy, but the Russians saw it was directed at them, and insisted on the ban. Typescript versions (Samizdat *avant la lettre*) were soon circulating. In contrast, pamphlets about Beveridge's projected welfare state not only circulated freely but had been dropped from the air onto German cities during hostilities. In Hitler's Berlin bunker were found minutes from officials on how to respond. Hayek would have been gratified to learn that they recommended saying that the Allies were just copying the Nazis' social security system. (Beveridge would have preferred another comparison. Ever tactless, he said to a journalist when his plan was adopted, "Now we're half way to Moscow"; a horrified British government made him recant.)

ACTUALLY, for all its polemical success, Hayek's book seems to have had little influence on economic policy, anywhere, for a generation. The socialists took over in Britain in 1945 and proceeded to do most of the things Hayek said were fatal to democracy. When Churchill returned to office, he remained loyal to the welfare liberalism he had inaugurated in 1909 and 1911, and did little to dismantle Labour's welfare state; the expression, welfare "from the cradle to the grave" is Churchill's coinage, by the way. For thirty years after Hayek's book, British governments followed policies nicknamed Butskellism (from Tory Rab Butler and Labour's Hugh Gaitskell) and later MacWilsonism—policies that reflected the quest for *The Middle Way* that had been the title of a book Macmillan wrote in 1938. That included flirting with central economic planning through such bodies as the Industrial Reorganization Corporation and the National Economic Development Councils (the Neddies).

In the United States, the 1946 full employment legislation inaugurated a generation of Keynesian policies, accompanied by generalized government intervention in favor of farm price supports, minimum wages, pro-union discrimination, rent controls, protective tariffs, and middle class welfare in various forms. Planning was so little discredited that Hubert Humphrey and economist Wassily Leontief campaigned in 1974-76 for a national economic planning board. In continental Europe, France's "indicative planning" and even many features of West Germany's social market economy were anathema to Hayek.

Ignored by policymakers, Hayek took the long way round and rallied several score apostles of the free market to a movement he founded, the Mont Pelerin Society, named for its first meeting place, near Vevey in Switzerland, in 1947. Hayek denied it was a propaganda organization and indeed attendance at its annual gatherings did not mean accepting the prophecies of *The Road to*

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Serfdom. Milton Friedman, a member who is popularly linked with Hayek, was, as an economic theorist, poles apart from him. Other members implemented economic reforms in Europe (Ludwig Erhard in West Germany, Jacques Rueff in France, Luigi Einaudi in Italy, and Reinhard Kamitz in Austria), but not by following Hayek's prescriptions. Those ideas moved nearer to practice with the foundation, sponsored by Hayek, of the Institute of Economic Affairs in London in 1957, followed by similar free-market think tanks from America to Australia. The accession to office of Margaret Thatcher in 1979 and Ronald Reagan in 1981 marked the triumph of two avowed readers and admirers of *The Road to Serfdom*.

By then "serfdom" and the "servile state" had been renamed, less theatrically and more clinically, "dependency culture", and some attempts were now made to curb it. This was described by opponents as gutting the welfare state, but nothing of the sort happened in the United States or the United Kingdom. Reagan reduced the appropriations desired by Congress, but social outlays and spending on the poor continued to grow under his administration. The British welfare budget, in constant expansion from 1945 to 1976, leveled out at a steady two-thirds of government spending, or one quarter of GNP. Elsewhere, welfare flourished; in France, for example, the minimum wage has continued to increase as a proportion of the median wage, and 75 percent of French families now get family allowances. Worldwide, recent adjustments made to social budgets have been responses, not to Hayekian or any other ideology, but to cruel necessity: the growing number of the elderly, the proliferation of one-parent families, increased consumption of medical services and, in most advanced economies, high levels of unemployment have combined to make the burden intolerable.

The next surge of interest in *The Road to Serfdom* came with the crumbling of the Soviet empire. The economists in Poland and Russia who emerged as the first wave of reformers had long before secretly made Friedrich Hayek and Milton Friedman their patron saints. All the former satellites soon followed: "Whereas in the West it may still be fashionable to decry *The Road to Serfdom* as a 'mere political pamphlet', it is widely read in newly democratized countries like Czechoslovakia and Hungary", said Willem Keizer in 1994. That being so, these converts to capitalism would soon discover that Hayek demonstrated not only the impossibility of central planning but also the futility of other centrally organized quick fixes such as instant capitalism, the "leap into the market", "capitalism by design", "free markets in 500 days", and other disasters visited upon these disorganized societies by zealots. The professor of international economics at a Budapest academy says that in Hungary at least it is now understood that Hayek showed that capitalism must evolve slowly, organically; it cannot be bestowed by social engineers on societies suffering institutional void, insecure and uncertain property rights, and coordination failures.[1]

HAVING REVIEWED the reception of *The Road to Serfdom* first at the popular level and then by the policymakers, it is time to consider what Hayek's peers, the economists and political scientists, made of it. Apart from some rearguard skirmishes by retreating socialist economists, there was agreement that Hayek had won his main point, the one that shook many left-leaning intellectuals from their dogmatism: what he called the synoptic illusion. There is no one point where all the information that can bear on an economy (and should bear, in a free society) can be concentrated, no one man's head, no committee, no planning board. Such information is hopelessly dispersed, and it is changing faster than it could ever be collected. Some of it is not even articulate, but it nevertheless becomes effective in the bids and offers of market participants. The market is thus the only place where all relevant information becomes available, revealing in price mismatches and anomalies opportunities for

[1]Laszlo Csaba, *The Capitalist Revolution in Eastern Europe* (Aldershot: Elgar, 1995).

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entrepreneurs. Once that is accepted, the possibility of central direction or control vanishes, and with it Karl Marx's vision of society as "the product of freely associated men . . . consciously regulated by them in accordance with a settled plan." Any attempt at such a thing would be either (Hayek varied on this) bound to fail or enormously inefficient.

This was the conclusion that Hayek, for his part, drew from an arcane debate between economists about whether socialist managers could calculate least-cost production in the absence of market prices. The "socialist calculation" debate began in the last century, but Mises brought it into focus in 1920 and Hayek thereafter played an active role in it. Mises was not satisfied with the conclusions Hayek drew, saying Hayek put too much emphasis on recent information and too little on property owners' calculations of future prices. (So bigger and better computers would be no help.) But Hayek's achievement was to show that the upshot of this highly technical dispute told against many current proposals for social reconstruction, planning, and government regulation. Socialism would not work, not because citizens were not virtuous enough but because there was a knowledge deficit at the center, and there always would be. Those who were reluctant to accept Hayek's case against the unified central plan were left to be convinced by the grotesque misallocation of resources in the Soviet Union.

Equally convincing was Hayek's demonstration of how and why the central plan is incompatible with political and cultural freedoms. A plan requires, imperatively, prior agreement on what and how to produce, and subsequent agreement to stick with it and accept its outcomes. Such agreement is not to be found, and there arises the temptation to fudge it, by propaganda and eventually by repression of disagreement, and by delegating decisions from divided parliaments to arbitrary bureaucrats. This part of the book is written with a passionate eloquence (written, incidentally, by a foreigner composing his first book in English) that drew the admiration of critics like Keynes, and the dismay of nominated targets like Harold Laski, Karl Mannheim, and E.H. Carr.

What drew much incredulity was Hayek's strange choice of Nazi Germany as the type of serfdom produced by economic planning. He had little else to say against it except that it practiced planning, and he ascribed the spread of planning ideas in Britain to the influence of Germans such as Sombart, Plenge, Lensch, and Moeller van den Bruck. Most of his readers had never heard of them, and the British Left and U.S. liberals were, reasonably enough, offended by the suggestion that they got their policies from the sorry bunch whom Fritz Stern was later to describe in *The Politics of Cultural Despair* (1961). The implication that the regimes of Hitler and Mussolini were the end result of dabbling in state planning, of gradual and piecemeal departures from free markets, was seen to be absurd by those who had read Elie Halevy's demonstration, in *L'Ère des tyrannies* (1938), that the dictatorships were born of violent revolution. Pigou said in his 1944 review that Hayek's history was all wrong: Hitler's and Mussolini's resort to central planning was a means, not the cause, of tyranny. To be sure, Nazi ideology rejected the free market of Western liberalism and the calculating rationality of economic man, but it was not for all that to be defined as an *economic* heresy.

In deploring the regimentation of wartime, Hayek said, "During the war we all had to go to some extent totalitarian." So it should have been evident that a regime whose whole purpose was war would practice a command economy, *Wirtschaft unter Zwang*. Trying to frighten naughty little socialists by saying they would grow up to be wicked Nazis was poor rhetoric and it put many critics off the book. The Soviet regime was a better target, and its moral, economic, and political affiliation with Nazism had already been established by Franz Borkenau. Hayek was right to dismiss the leftist myth that Nazism was capitalism's answer to communism, for they were in many ways birds of a feather, given to imitating each other. But even so, it

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would have to be admitted that Bolshevism began with the aim of a central plan, to be implemented by ruthless coercion. That was its ideological starting point, not the end result of cumulative government intervention in free markets. As it was, Hayek had little to say about the Soviet Union, possibly because it was still a wartime ally.

All of this could be disregarded as an inept presentation of his case. Not so the dogma of the slippery slope, which was at the heart of Hayek's argument and probably the real reason he wrote the book. The epigraph of *The Road to Serfdom* is David Hume's line, "It is seldom that liberty of any kind is lost all at once", a counterverity that shows how much less they knew in 1770 about revolutions and coups d'état than we do. It prefigures the slippery slope, of which Hayek's teacher Mises had said (in the 1940 Geneva edition of *Human Action*), "Every step a government takes beyond the fulfilment of its essential functions of protecting the smooth operation of the market economy against aggression, whether on the part of domestic or foreign disturbers, is a step forward on a road that directly leads into the totalitarian system where there is no freedom at all." Furthermore, in 1944 Hayek said of that road, "Yet, though the road be long, it is one on which it becomes more difficult to turn back as one advances." He offered to explain why government interventions in the economy were cumulative and eventually irreversible. Central allocation of resources meant that labor had to be directed, like other factors, so the state began to control individuals, notably in their role of producers. Planners got drawn into detailed economic decisions, rather than setting general rules, so they inevitably started favoring some interests, disadvantaging others. When one intervention failed (e.g., price controls), further intervention was resorted to (say, requisitions or rationing or subsidies).

It was because of this tendency to cumulative involvement that Hayek insisted there could be no halfway house between competition and planning, no social democratic mixed economy. The middle way, says John Gray, became "the principal target" of *The Road to Serfdom*. As Eamonn Butler said in his *Hayek* (1983), "One of the most powerful themes of *The Road to Serfdom* is that even modest economic planning has the effect of slowly but inexorably eroding the values and attitudes which are vital if freedom is to exist." Hayek even argued that attempts to combine competition and planning produced the worst effects of both, the benefits of neither. When he wrote a new introduction to a 1976 edition of the book, Hayek admitted that socialism no longer meant central planning but "chiefly the extensive redistribution of incomes through taxation and the institutions of the welfare state", but he added defiantly that "the ultimate outcome tends to be very much the same."

Critics protested from the start that to go from saying that central planning is a disaster to condemning interventionist policies is a non sequitur. Such policies would indeed have unintended consequences, notably market impairment, but "none of the arguments mentioned here demonstrates that what lies at the bottom of the slope is socialism" (Frank Van Dun). Paul Samuelson asked in his 1948 economics textbook whether it was true

> that each step away from the market system and toward the social reforms of the welfare state is *inevitably* a journey that must end in a totalitarian state with neither efficiency nor liberty? The opposing view, held by such evolutionists as Roosevelt, Churchill, and Nehru is that gradual reforms are the only way to prevent a cataclysmic descent through revolution into a communist dictatorship. If the evolutionists are right, Hayek is quite wrong.

Samuelson evidently thought he was. Lionel Robbins said the dangers Hayek foresaw might happen, but Hayek was alarmist to say they *must* happen. Welfare, for example old age pensions, could become a burden but why say it must lead to "social disintegration and the concentration camp"? Some interventions do have cumulative effects, like price controls, but not all taxes and subsidies or all forms of govern-

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ment ownership and control do. There is therefore no logical or historical reason to fear for the stability of the mixed economies.

Raymond Aron told an audience at Berkeley in 1963 that the proposition that intervention inexorably leads to total planning and totalitarianism was so manifestly false that Hayek could not have meant it. The trouble is he said it. When challenged, Hayek would say that he was issuing a warning, not a prophecy (and promptly return to prophesying with all the confidence of a Marxist). This cavalier attitude to political discussion is common among those who come to it only occasionally. It is negligent to say that X must happen (a prophecy) without saying whether such and such circumstances might avert it. But it is positively thoughtless to say that X can happen (a warning) and not bother to specify the conditions of its appearance and non-appearance. Of course in the present case most of those conditions would be political: all the social forces, political institutions, traditions, customs, and moralities that defend freedom (more precisely, exemplify and practice it) ensure there is no slippery slope—and they are not waiting for an outsider's "warnings" or "prophecies" to play their role.

Keynes pointed this out in a letter to Hayek when *The Road to Serfdom* came out: "I accuse you of perhaps confusing a little bit the moral and the material issues. Dangerous acts can be done safely in a community which thinks and feels rightly, which would be the way to hell if they were executed by those who think and feel wrongly." (The text of this letter, in which Keynes calls for more planning, not less, and says Hayek's philosophy will end in failure and disillusion in the United States, is in Harrod's *Life*, p. 436-7.) Giovanni Malagodi put it in this Crocean way: "This brings us to reflect again on the immense spiritual and human force of liberty. When it is deeply rooted in the history and in the mind of the citizen, it can withstand larger doses of centralized or semi-centralized planning without withering away. In fact, it constitutes by itself a barrier against the spreading of total dirigism."

As years went by it was plain to see that the road to serfdom was opened up by the Red Army and not by the mixed economy and the welfare state. Apologists of Hayek's 1944 book therefore had to resort to various saving hypotheses. Hayek himself led the way. In lectures he gave in Australia in 1976 (collected as *Social Justice, Socialism and Democracy*) he said that

> socialist parties in the West have almost all for the time being abandoned the most obviously dangerous demands for a centrally planned economy. . . . [This] has much slowed down the process that I had predicted. . . . But can it lastingly avoid the same effects? There are strong reasons for doubting that. . . . Though the process may be slow and gradual, a government which begins to control prices is bound to be driven step by step towards the control of all prices, and, since this must destroy the functioning of the market, to a central direction of the economy.

Attempts to establish a "just distribution" of incomes entail "being driven to establish an essentially totalitarian system." This was said when most governments had been induced by the "oil shock" to impose price controls if not prices-and-incomes policies. None of these policies led to serfdom; none of them was very successful either, and that was enough (combined with a natural resentment of such controls) to ensure they were soon abandoned, with no sign of cumulative state intervention.

One contributor to the 1977 *Essays on Hayek* (edited by Fritz Machlup) said "the West" had indeed given up the centralized planning that would have led to serfdom, but "Instead we have taken the road of inflation, governmental profligacy, and uncoordinated governmental intervention into the market; and this must lead us to the serfdom that Hayek foresaw just as certainly as centralized planning, if perhaps more slowly." Another contributor averred that serfdom had already arrived:

> Such has been the process by which the freedom of the individual has been reduced in our time. No violent revolution; no armed dictatorship; every

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> thing appears in its usual form. Constitutions are still in force and democracy still functions, creating the illusion that all is well and that the people still rule. But what a monstrous deception! Beneath the hollow forms of constitutional government grows an increasingly powerful state, manipulating democracy to serve its own ends.

This comes close to the paranoid rhetoric of the wildest American dissidents.

Contributors to a similar volume in 1984 (*The Political Economy of Freedom: Essays in honor of F.A. Hayek*) said the forty years since *The Road to Serfdom* had shown the ineptitude of the mixed economy, there had been "an unnoticed loss of liberty", while Sweden had become "a benign servitude", and concluded, "Perhaps it is time to heed Hayek's warning." Some contributors conceded that Hayek's references to serfdom and slavery were polemical, vague, and careless. Yet in another collection in that year (*Hayek's Serfdom Revisited*, edited by John Burton), John Gray declared, "No one could say today, 40 years later, that Hayek's argument missed its mark. . . . We are well on the road to serfdom."

MENTION OF John Gray, fellow of Jesus College and professor of politics at Oxford, reminds us that if we are following the history of changing attitudes to Hayek, there is no need to go poring over dozens of different writers; it is enough to read Gray's output over the years, for it has evolved mightily. In a 1980 paper in the *Journal of Libertarian Studies*, "Hayek on Liberty and Tradition", Gray commended him on four grounds: skepticism about the government's ability to promote public good; awareness of the danger of unlimited democracy; his critique of distributive "social justice"; and opposition to large-scale social engineering. Gray's reservations about Hayek concerned his epistemology and his evolutionist view of moral codes.

Gray contributed to the 1984 Burton volume mentioned above an essay that sought "the road from serfdom." It was true that, in apparent contradiction to Hayek's *Road to Serfdom*, nowhere had unlimited democracy led to hyperinflation, nor government regulation to totalitarianism. Nevertheless, liberties, Gray maintained, had been lost, and the ground won back so far by Reagan and Thatcher should not be exaggerated. Rent control and price control restricted freedom, and servility induced by the welfare state further endangered liberty. There was still a danger of hyperinflation, a "terminal boom" that must "mortally imperil" the cause of liberty. In a more scholarly book Gray published in the same year, *Hayek on Liberty* (1984), most of Hayek's later, voluminous work on social philosophy is traced back to its first outline in *The Road to Serfdom*. In particular, Hayek's archconservative notion that uncritical observance of traditional rules is the basis of social life is set out with complaisance. In *Liberalism* (1986), Gray praised *The Road to Serfdom* for its "bold and striking thesis" that Nazism was the result of socialism. Hayek's work was "without doubt the most profound and distinguished statement of the case for liberty this century." It had "fallen on deaf ears" until Reagan and Thatcher gave it "a real political importance." But at this date, Gray's first doubts about Hayek appeared: he wondered whether liberal ideas were being tainted by contact with "free market conservatism, with its illiberal policies in the areas of personal and civil liberties."

By the time he wrote *Enlightenment's Wake* (1995), the Thatcherite era had run its course and Gray's opinion of Hayek had changed utterly. Hayek's neo-liberalism is now mockingly called "paleo-liberalism", "a Maoism of the Right." Free market economics have ruined communities and destroyed the Tory party:

> The undoing of conservatism has come about as an unintended consequence of Hayekian policy. The hegemony, within conservative thought and practice, of neo-liberal ideology has had the effect of destroying conservatism as a viable political project in our time and in any foreseeable future . . . inherited institutions and practices have been swept away by the market forces which neo-liberal policies release or reinforce.

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Hayek had unleashed "a managerialist Cultural Revolution seeking to refashion the entire national life on the impoverished model of contract and market exchange . . . a permanent revolution of unfettered market processes . . . a self-undermining political project." Thatcher's reliance on free markets is denounced as "Hayek's wager", "market fundamentalism", "Manchester *redivivus*." Britain was never on a road to serfdom but was now on the road to anomie, ungovernability, the loss of authority, governments made impotent by judicial activists. The tone actually gets shriller after that. Projects such as the World Trade Organization and the European Union are "neo-liberal rationalist utopias that will founder on the reefs of history and human nature, with costs in human suffering that may come to rival those of 20th century experiments in central economic planning." If one takes those words literally, Gray is warning of tens of millions of deaths as a result of what he takes for Hayekian liberalism.

Gray returned to the attack in *Endgames: Questions in late modern political thought* (1997). Hayek is there dismissed as "a neo-liberal ideologue" guilty of "peddling an Enlightenment project of the most primitive variety—the free market utopia of paleo-liberals such as Herbert Spencer." His baleful influence over Thatcher had destroyed England and the Conservative Party. His economic policies had failed and now, Gray announced well before the elections that brought Labour to office, "the neo-liberal hegemony in Britain is over." The world of *The Road to Serfdom*, in which conservatives were obsessed with the danger of state tyranny, has quite passed away. The threats to freedom and well-being now come from the disintegration of the state, the ruination of common cultures, and the loss of popular traditions of fairness and justice.

When the election of last May confirmed the discomfiture of the Conservatives, Gray joined Demos, a think tank that advises Prime Minister Tony Blair. In a newspaper article on "The Tasks Ahead", he read the obituary of "the primitive ideology of market liberalism", of "the ideologies of the New Right (such as Hayek's)." They had been thrown out because they were insensitive to the popular longing for fairness, indifferent to vital human needs for community, and because they severed the link between economic rewards and meritorious performance. Communitarianism has arisen to correct these errors.

HAYEK'S IDEAS, we began by saying, and particularly those set out in *The Road to Serfdom*, have been subject to extraordinary ups and downs in learned, as well as in popular and political, estimation. This latest descent into obloquy at the hands of an eminent political philosopher who was once a sympathetic expositor might not be typical; it is evident from the few quotations I have given that in order to achieve his change of mind Professor Gray had to go from being a liberal suspicious of moral conservatism to being a conservative dismissive of economic liberalism, and not everyone is so versatile. Besides, whatever may be said of the "ravages" of Thatcherism, much of Gray's attack is unfair to Hayek. He never preached laisser faire and he tolerated a level of governmental intervention that would make Milton Friedman blanch. He came to endorse basic social services in health, education, and minimum incomes (though not of course minimum wages) as long as there was no control of prices or quantities, i.e., no impairment of competitive markets. Moreover, as a lifelong Catholic, he insisted on the observance of traditional rules of conduct, some of which we could never rationally justify, as the basis of society.

For all that, there was no doubt that much of what Gray now calls community, fairness, and merit, Hayek would reject as the morality of "tribalism", the myopic morals of small face-to-face groups where a good deed (and a bad one, for that matter) concerns a known neighbor. Against that tribalism (we would now say communitarianism) Hayek set "the extended social order" where doing good means living in accordance with abstract rules, and where no one relies on the benevolence of a neighbor but on the self-interest of unknown strangers

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who participate in the same market; in other words, the open society. Popper's two volume celebration of the open society, as against an "oppressively social morality", was in press when he read *The Road to Serfdom* and he got his publisher to put in a note making clear that Popper had finished his book first and could not have borrowed from Hayek. Later Popper suggested that *The Road to Serfdom* could well be read as volume three of *The Open Society and its Enemies*. Actually, he was not as close to Hayek as he liked to think, mainly because his knowledge of economics was primitive and Hayek was too polite to tell him so. But on the main point of devaluing the cozy tribal *Gemeinschaft* as against the vast, open, and anonymous *Gesellschaft*, these two Viennese were in harmony.

Ernest Gellner thought this needed explaining, and he called his explanation "the Viennese theory."[2] He said that from the middle of the last century "the individualistic, atomized, cultivated bourgeoisie of the Habsburg capital had to contend with the influx of swarms of kin-bound, collectivistic, rule-ignoring migrants from . . . the Balkans and Galicia." (He could have added Moravia and thus included the Freud family's move to Vienna.) The Viennese were marked by the experience, and people like Hayek and Popper "would seem to be haunted by the contrast between the creativity of an individualist bourgeoisie and the cultural sterility of kin-hugging gregarious migrants from some Balkan *zadruga*, whose clannish and collectivist feelings threaten liberty and progress." That, suggested Gellner, was why Hayek was horrified by the thought of enslavement to communal, affectionate cooperation toward agreed ends, as in a plan, much preferring the liberation that came with abstract, impersonal, rule-bound market society.

There could be something in this but the main point would not be the psychological one, about two contrasting attitudes to social life. The main point is the political one, namely that there is a large array of stable positions in between the extremes, and just because you abandon one extremity does not mean you are "on the road" to the other. There is serfdom—there was a massive case of it until just the other day—and a unified economic plan is one sure way to it, among other ways. Likewise there is the open, anonymous society, though one must doubt that it was ever, or ever could be, as frigidly impersonal and rule-bound as Hayek imagined. But there are a number of workable, livable, viable compromises in between. To try one of them is not to venture onto a slippery slope. □

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[2]Ernest Gellner, *Plough, Sword and Book* (London: Collins Harville, 1988), pp. 26-30.

A bibliographical note: What his peers thought of Hayek over fifty years is extensively sampled in the four volumes of *F.A. Hayek: Critical Assessments*, edited by J.C. Wood and R.N. Woods (London: Routledge, 1991). There will be found the reviews of *The Road to Serfdom* referred to above, by A.C. Pigou, J.A. Schumpeter, and Eric Roll, as well as the articles cited by Lionel Robbins and J.N. Gray. Other collections of articles on Hayek, in addition to those edited by Fritz Machlup and John Burton cited above, include *Hayek, Co-ordination and Evolution*, edited by J. Birner and R. van Zijp (London: Routledge, 1994), which contains the papers by Willem Keizer and Frank van Dun; and *Zur Verfassung der Freiheit: Festgabe für F.A. von Hayek*, in the journal *Ordo* (vol. 30, 1979) and contains the paper by Giovanni Malagodi. Raymond Aron's 1963 lectures are in *Essai sur les libertés* (Paris: Pluriel, 1976). Samuel Brittan's *Capitalism and the Permissive Society* (London: Macmillan, 1973) includes a sympathetic restatement of Hayekian liberalism. *Hayek on Hayek: An autobiographical dialogue*, edited by S. Kresge and L. Wenar (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994) contains much fascinating reminiscence. For the latest judgments on Hayek one must consult Andrew Gamble's paper on him in *The Political Classics: Green to Dworkin* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996) and Gamble's book, *Hayek, The Iron Cage of Liberty* (Oxford, UK: Polity, 1996). The first issue of *Critical Review* for 1997 was devoted to Hayek; it was mostly very critical, with the notable exception of East European contributors.

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Faking It and Making It

Henry Sokolski

TELL WASHINGTON insiders that your work is focused on preventing the spread of strategic weapons—instead of reacting to it—and they'll think you're somewhat "intense" or at least unable to hold down a real job. Businessmen generally view this effort with suspicion; like promoting human rights, it is a concern that if taken too seriously might confound the ultimate liberalizing diplomacy of (their) commerce. Executive and legislative officials, meanwhile, might be eager to speak against the spread of nuclear, chemical, biological, and missile-related systems, but are squeamish about doing much about it.

Indeed, for our diplomatic corps, "engaging" the worst proliferators—China, Iraq, North Korea, and Russia—through government-sanctioned handouts or bribes almost always seems more realistic and effective than enforcing existing non-proliferation laws or, in the Iraqi case, mandated UN sanctions. Those in Congress troubled by such engagement generally seem willing to settle for executive reports on the latest proliferator (at least ten such reports are now required annually by law), the creation of some new non-proliferation directorate or program (the executive branch sports over sixty such offices), sanctions laws laden with loopholes (there are easily a dozen of these), or—the latest congressional initiative—a blue ribbon commission that somehow is supposed to make sense of all this.

This phony war against proliferation is full of tactical theatrics. Indeed, no administration has said as much about its non-proliferation commitments and "accomplishments" as Clinton's. Yet, when analyzed, most of its efforts simply amount to one or another form of surrender.

Consider North Korea. The government in Pyongyang violated its 1985 pledge to open its nuclear facilities to international inspections and was suspected of having diverted at least a bomb's worth of material when it announced its intention to withdraw from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1994. When the administration threatened sanctions, North Korea responded belligerently and the administration backed down. The outcome: the United States agreed to provide $5 billion in new nuclear reactors and hundreds of millions more in fuel oil to Pyongyang if only it would freeze its declared nuclear activities and eventually uphold its non-proliferation inspection pledges sometime after the year 2000. In this deal, which frontloaded North Korea's benefits but deferred its responsibilities, the important thing seemed to have been to keep North Korea from leaving the NPT, a treaty the White House was then trying feverishly to get extended. South Korea's initial reaction: With its U.S. ally and nuclear guarantor cut-

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ting deals directly with Stalinist North Korea, perhaps it was time for Seoul to develop its own "civilian" plutonium production option.

Then there is Iraq. Shortly after the Gulf War, the United States cared enough about Saddam's violations of the UN inspection and dismantlement resolutions to get the UN to find Iraq in "material breach", a finding understood to permit unilateral military action by UN members. And in January 1993, just before Bush left office, the United States, with British and French help, hit Iraq with cruise missiles to get Saddam to open his country up to unimpeded inspections and to respect the no-fly zones in the north and south.

For several months Saddam behaved. But in June 1993, Baghdad again impeded UN inspections and the UN, again, found Saddam in material breach. This time, however, with the Clinton administration now in office, no military action was taken on that account. It also was the last time the UN felt moved to find Iraq in material breach. Later in 1996, of course, the United States staged another cruise missile attack against Iraq, but this was in reaction to Iraq's attack on the Kurdish city of Irbil, not for its numerous inspection violations.

Not until Saddam first demanded the expulsion of U.S. inspectors from UN inspection teams on October 29, 1997 was the White House forced to act. Anxious to appear firm, it sent two aircraft carriers to the Gulf, but in the end (with the whole world watching) it blinked and used Russia's pro-Iraqi Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov to negotiate with Saddam. U.S. inspectors were allowed back into Iraq, but the sovereignty of Iraq and Saddam's rule were triumphantly reaffirmed, along with the cultivated recognition that perhaps the UN sanctions were too harsh and would soon have to be loosened. By late January, Saddam's continued defiance of UN inspectors seemed likely to prompt a U.S. military response. After so many months of inattention, though, such a response is likely to be read as being more a reaction to Iraqi badgering than a serious strategy to eliminate the threat.

In the case of Iran, the White House has tried to be more serious. Initially, Clinton officials insisted that the world cut off all assistance to Tehran's civilian nuclear program and military, and it followed Congress' demand to sanction states that invested in Iran. Yet, when China and Russia tested Clinton's resolve with dangerous missile, chemical, and nuclear transfers to Tehran, again the administration essentially backed down. The process of buckling began with China's sales of scores of advanced long-range C-802 anti-shipping missiles to Iran's armed forces. The U.S. commander of the Fifth Fleet, Vice Admiral Scott Radd, described these missiles as a direct threat to our forces stationed in the Persian Gulf: "It used to be we just had to worry about land-based cruise missiles. Now they have the potential to have them throughout the Gulf mounted on ships."[1] The administration, however, demurred, insisting that the missiles were insufficiently destabilizing to warrant sanctions as authorized by U.S. law. The White House then went on to approve hundreds of millions worth of sensitive U.S. missile-related exports to the very Chinese firms known to be proliferating missiles.

Beijing also has tried to sell Iran reactors and uranium facilities useful for making nuclear weapons. To allay concerns here, administration officials at first simply echoed China's assurances that it would suspend such sales *assuming* the United States was sufficiently forthcoming with additional nuclear cooperation. Such cooperation, however, said the Chinese, would have to go beyond the nearly one billion dollars in nuclear-related exports that the administration had already subsidized with taxpayer-guaranteed loans for Chinese firms known to be assisting Iranian and Pakistani nuclear efforts. To be "sufficient", the Chinese argued, the United States would have to give it access to sensitive

[1]Quoted in Bill Gertz, "Pentagon Began Seeking Sanctions on China Months Ago", *Washington Times*, February 10, 1996.

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nuclear items that U.S. law normally prohibited to countries that proliferate. This meant, in turn, that the White House would have to bend U.S. law to certify that China had stopped proliferating, and to announce that nuclear cooperation was in *America's* national interest. Never mind that China is still selling Iran and others dangerous chemical, biological, and missile technology and materials, or that it is still lending nuclear assistance to Pakistan's and India's "peaceful" nuclear programs; what was important was that China had privately promised that it would not make any *new* nuclear sales to Iran (what this specifically covers still remains to be seen), and had ratified the Chemical Weapons Convention (even before the U.S. Senate did so).

But what of China's continuing sale of *chemical* weapons ingredients to Iran? Although these transfers were known to Clinton officials as early as 1993, for a long time the White House took little action. It was too busy promoting the Chemical Weapons Convention's passage, a classic case of subordinating reality to form and appearance. When the administration finally did act in 1997, it limited the application of U.S. sanctions only to several Chinese commercial entities (the premise being that the Chinese government wasn't implicated), and it did this only *after* granting over $21 million in U.S. government-guaranteed loans to sell controlled U.S. chemical production equipment to Nanjing Chemical Industrial Group—the key firm still being sanctioned.

Clinton's backsliding with China was hardly lost on Russian officials. They too were in the proliferation business. In 1995 the Clinton administration objected to Moscow's plans to complete the construction of two power reactors and an uneconomical uranium enrichment plant (a facility critical for making nuclear bombs) for Tehran, and to sell it a long list of advanced conventional arms. Boris Yeltsin, in need of U.S. aid, initially backed down, promising Clinton that he would not sell the enrichment plant (a sale that some U.S. experts suggested was a straw man to begin with) and announcing a moratorium on any new Russian conventional arms deals with Iran. Within weeks, however, Russian reactor work began in Iran. More important, Russian organizations promised to help Iran build highly destabilizing long-range rockets. Thus, shortly after the White House backed Russia's entry into the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR)—this, in order to make it "non-discriminatory"—Moscow transferred complete intermediate-range ballistic missile engines to Tehran, along with rocket experts, production facilities, and a high-speed wind tunnel. As an additional twist, several of the Russian entities involved were receiving millions in U.S. tax dollars to work on NASA's space station. When the Israelis shared intelligence on the deal with their U.S. counterparts and members on Capitol Hill, State Department officials initially downplayed the matter. Given Israeli concerns and conclusive U.S. intelligence corroborating the rocket sale, however, the White House finally appointed a special U.S. envoy, Frank Wisner, to get the Russians to relent. The Russians were hardly impressed. Their response after nearly six months of solicitation and an actual test firing of Russian rocket engines in Iran: Our government did nothing wrong.[2]

Such weak pleading is hardly unique. The White House has repeatedly accommodated Russian and Chinese transfers of chemical, missile, and nuclear items to Syria, Brazil, Egypt, India, Pakistan, Libya, and Iraq. Congress has protested from time to time, but it too has toyed with diplomatic "engagement." Last session, after listening to the concerns of several defense contractors and our government's State and Defense Department area desk officers, Congress gave the adminis-

[2]See Thomas W. Lippman, "U.S. Keeps After Russia to Halt Flow of Missile Technology to Iran", *Washington Post*, January 18, 1998; and Barton G. Gellman, "Shift by Iran Fuels Debate Over Sanctions", *Washington Post*, December 31, 1992.

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tration authority to reverse non-proliferation sanctions it had imposed against Pakistan's nuclear program. Pakistan, members argued, had suffered enough.

Still, there are signs that Congress is trying to get tougher. It held hearings last year on Chinese and Russian proliferation and even reinstated limited export controls over advanced U.S. computers that—because of Clinton "decontrols"—ended up going to weapons development laboratories in Russia and China. After the House bill passed, though, industry intervened. The Commerce Department had already authorized U.S. exports to China that would enable it to produce computers far more advanced than those the legislation would control. So, after intense lobbying from the administration and the computer industry, the Senate rejected the House bill and asked for yet another report. Additional reports, however, again leaked to the press that Russia was still receiving advanced U.S. computers. With this, even the Senate felt compelled to act and the House law was finally passed. Still the White House was unimpressed: Although it announced that it would "implement the law faithfully as best we can", it warned that it planned to ask Congress to modify or repeal the law since it was "impractical" to enforce.

Known Victories

WHAT ACCOUNTS FOR so much feckless reticence? One factor, certainly, is a predisposition toward defeat: A determined proliferator (by definition), we are told, can't be stopped. Programs can be devised to delay proliferation (programs to reduce leakage of strategic materials and know-how from the former Soviet Union, export controls, and so forth), or to reduce the damage it might otherwise inflict (the Defense Department's counter-proliferation program), but ultimately, stopping proliferation is impossible. Our only hope is to barter with bad actors to secure pledges of better behavior, while preparing for the worst militarily by buying and developing better gas masks, inoculations, detectors, defenses, and bunker-busting bombs of our own.

This is the conventional wisdom. It is also wrong. Most proliferators, it turns out, are not so determined. Taiwan and South Korea, for example, have launched several covert nuclear weapons programs of their own but each time that the United States has learned of them and taken issue, the programs have been disbanded.[3] Then there are countries that actually acquired such weapons. White South Africa, for example, built an arsenal of eight nuclear weapons to protect itself from a Soviet-backed invasion. Yet with the end of the Cold War and movement toward majority rule, Pretoria reconsidered; it saw the downsides of nuclear possession (continued sanctions followed by use or sharing of the weapons with radical powers), and gave them up. Ukraine, which inherited the world's third-largest nuclear weapons stockpile, was eager in the early 1990s for U.S. and Western financial and political support to hedge against Russian political and economic intimidation. But lacking the wherewithal to make its strategic force anything more than a provocative, vulnerable target, Ukraine bargained for generous Western and Russian offers of aid, received them, and surrendered its weapons for dismantlement.

Meanwhile, Brazil and Argentina, whose militaries had long supported covert nuclear weapons programs, went democratic in the early 1990s. In an effort to assert control over their military and to improve financial and strategic trade ties with the West that had been strained by their nuclear projects, both governments suspended these programs.

Finally on the nuclear front, there is India. Its atomic elite, anxious to complete a second "peaceful" nuclear test before conclusion of an international agreement to ban nuclear testing, had a nuclear test site at-the-ready to fire in the fall of 1995. Anticipating this, Congress

[3]See Tim Weiner, "How a Spy Left Taiwan in the Cold", *New York Times*, December 20, 1997.

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passed a law in 1994 that prohibited U.S. financial institutions (public and private) from doing business with non-weapons states that tested. Cash-strapped and eager to jump-start its economy through privatization and foreign investment, the Indian government was briefed on the law in November. Days later, New Delhi dismantled the test site.

Matching these nuclear non-proliferation successes are a number of impressive victories against strategic rocketry proliferation. In the early 1990s Taiwan's military announced its intention to develop a "peaceful" space launch vehicle (read: intercontinental ballistic missile) for "scientific" research. Taiwan's scientific community, however, objected that the project lacked scientific merit. The United States weighed in; the project was killed. For different reasons and through different means, Egypt and Argentina, who were jointly developing an intermediate-range ballistic missile with Iraq, were persuaded to desist. In Egypt's case, it needed U.S. foreign aid. With Argentina, the desire for respectability (after its period of military rule and the Falklands fiasco), formal U.S. military relations, access to Western financial markets, and the desire to assert civilian control over the military (which had secretly launched the missile effort) all conspired to defeat the program.

In the early 1990s both whites and blacks in South Africa supported their government's development of a space launch vehicle. The controlling—and mistaken—assumption here was that the government could make money launching other countries' satellites. When the State Department, following U.S. law, sanctioned Pretoria and suggested that South Africa finance the rocket project privately to prove whether it was financially viable, Pretoria took on the challenge. The International Monetary Fund, from which the majority government needed to borrow billions, made clear that it could hardly justify extending credit to South Africa if it was going to waste it on reckless rocket projects. Shortly thereafter, with no prospect of private backing in view, the program was killed.

The Least That Success Requires

WHAT DOES THIS record suggest? First, that success is possible. Second, that in many instances, it is natural: As countries become more prosperous and democratic (i.e., as despotic forms of government and economy give way to markets and liberal rule), they have less to fear from one another and a greater interest in terminating unnecessary, costly, and dangerous strategic weapons projects. Those who want to promote non-proliferation, therefore, have a stake in promoting democracy and in seeing tyrannical governments give way to more liberal regimes—a development that, in time, will allow democratic states to de-emphasize their own strategic nuclear deterrents.

Third, proliferation successes to date suggest that in regions where democracies are threatened by non-democratic neighbors, sound security alliances with the great democracies (the United States and its key allies) are critical to restrain further proliferation. This, in turn, suggests why the non-proliferation policies of the United States and its allies are of such disproportionate influence: Other states, such as Russia and China, might offer strategic weapons capabilities to threatened democracies like India and Brazil, but they are unlikely to serve as worthy security or trading partners. On the other hand, when the United States and its allies downplay the significance of proliferation activities (such as Russia's missile assistance to Iran), allow themselves to be subjected to nuclear blackmail (by North Korea), or support known proliferators (through loan guarantees on strategic technology exports to missile, nuclear, and chemical proliferators), all states, including the non-democracies, are sure to interpret such behavior as a green light for their doing likewise.

This, then, brings us to a final observation: There may be times when sanctioning proliferators is politically contentious. But if properly targeted and tailored, sanctions can leverage proliferators to better behavior. The

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trick here is to target: Ideally sanctions should deprive proliferators of something *they* must have but that *we* can easily live without (e.g., Indian access to U.S. financial institutions). This, in turn, suggests that the current debate over whether to sanction *per se* is largely beside the point. The question is what kind of sanction, applied how, and against whom.

WHAT DOES all of this recommend? Here is a minimalist agenda.

First, follow the law. Being precise in the application of sanctions is sensible, but bending U.S. non-proliferation laws in order to secure the promise of better behavior from bad actors undermines U.S. authority and is bad business. U.S. policy toward North Korea and China immediately comes to mind.

Unfortunately, the nuclear deal struck with Pyongyang is an accomplished fact. Nothing in it, however, says that the United States must interpret it in a manner that undermines U.S. non-proliferation laws. The White House is currently allowing North Korea to put off proving what nuclear weapons material it has produced and dismantling its weapons material production facilities until the first of the two promised U.S. reactors is nearly complete. This may be convenient for North Koreans (who also plainly enjoy blackmailing us), but it strains U.S. nuclear non-proliferation laws that prohibit extending nuclear assistance to probable proliferators. Instead, the United States could and should interpret the deal to require that Pyongyang prove its nuclear innocence and begin dismantling its most dangerous facilities well *before* the first U.S. reactor comes on line. Indeed, with the recent financial crisis and South Korea's and Japan's newfound reticence to pay for the reactors, now would be a good time to drop them from the deal altogether and offer non-nuclear power plants, which would be much cheaper and easier to build.[4]

As for China, formal U.S. nuclear cooperation should wait upon Beijing's demonstration that it has mended its proliferating ways. Indeed, a string of performance failures with imported French reactors has made China's nuclear elite anxious to access American technology. Given China's continuing desire to assist Pakistan's bomb program, the United States should insist that China join what every other declared nuclear weapons state that has nuclear cooperation with the United States has already joined: the Nuclear Suppliers Group, an organization that prohibits its members from selling nuclear technology to any state that fails to place all of its nuclear activities under international inspection. This would not only show China's good faith, but would make it unnecessary for the President to bend U.S. nuclear cooperation requirements in order to certify Beijing.

Second, stop subsidizing known proliferators. Last year, the U.S. government approved over $545 million in controlled strategic technology exports to China. This was in addition to the $6.5 billion in strategic technology that the United States had sent to China since 1992. Many of these transfers were made to chemical, nuclear, and space firms that U.S. intelligence has identified as being responsible for the proliferation that the White House is supposedly against. This is assuredly not an argument against trade or against diplomatic, cultural, and commercial relations with China. But good relations hardly require the U.S. government to allow *and* subsidize trade that imperils U.S. security interests.

A similar picture can be painted of U.S. commerce and government-to-government cooperation with Russia. Many of these high-technology transfers, like those to China, are subsidized by U.S. taxpayer-guaranteed loans from the U.S. Export-Import Bank and the Overseas Investment Corporation. They are paid for directly out of the U.S. Treasury. If preventing proliferation is to be taken seriously, this should stop. A sure way to do this has been devised by Congressmen Curt Weldon and Ed Markey. Their bill, the Proliferation

[4]See Victor Gilinsky and Henry Sokolski, "A Silver Lining to Asia's Financial Crisis", *Washington Post*, January 19, 1998.

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Desubsidization Act, would require the director of Central Intelligence (as opposed to cabinet-level secretaries inclined to pull their punches for the President) to produce a classified list of foreign entities assisting other states' missile, nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons programs. Using this list, the U.S. government should ban the transfer of licensed or controlled U.S. high-technology to such entities or the approval of government-backed loans or appropriations for such exports until the CIA director certifies that those in question have stopped proliferating and are unlikely to resume.

Third, stop making the most vicious proliferators seem legitimate by continually negotiating non-proliferation deals with them. Like it or not, the United States has created special relationships with Iraq and North Korea, two vicious, tyrannical states that either have, or are but a screwdriver's twist away from possessing, weapons of mass destruction. That this milk is spilt is not a reason for us to keep pouring. Rather than negotiate inspection compliance through the Russians or the U.S. Air Force, we need to eliminate the cause for the violations—Saddam's regime. In the case of North Korea (a dying regime), the United States should stop offering any more economic carrots and insist on firmer compliance with what has already been agreed to. As noted before in the case of the U.S.-North Korean nuclear deal, U.S. law should encourage Pyongyang to begin now what the agreement "allows" it to do much later—dismantle its declared nuclear weapons material production plants. Taking these lines of action may not assure success, but unlike our current negotiating ways, they will at least not make matters worse.

Fourth, find out what works. Administration officials, who have so skillfully dodged implementing existing U.S. non-proliferation laws, are forever complaining that these laws are too restrictive. Yet, privately, these same officials acknowledge (although they will not cite cases) how helpful these legal provisions are to "engage" proliferators diplomatically. Such hypocrisy may be convenient (the White House has so far refused congressional requests to specify how the laws should be changed), but it is no substitute for candidly identifying what does and does not work. Should Congress authorize the White House to cut off proliferators' access to the U.S. bond market (where People's Liberation Army front companies have raised billions of dollars for unspecified uses)? What of other financial sanctions? Could more be devised to be as effective against proliferation as those used to deter Indian nuclear testing? Congress needs to know and it should ask the White House to explain in a classified forum where sanctions have helped and where and why they need to be changed. These explanations should be frank, detailed, and given annually.

Finally, demand your dollar's worth. Missile and passive military defenses aside, our government spends well over $1 billion a year to combat and monitor strategic weapons proliferation. We may not have any sound strategies to fight proliferation, but there are a plethora of non-proliferation programs (and now special interest lobby groups) to confuse the issue. Worried about loose nukes leaking out of the former Soviet Union, terrorists using strategic weapons, mounting tons of dismantled nuclear weapons materials? Create a program, establish an office—in fact, create a whole slew of programs and offices. As in the case of the "war" against drugs, you needn't solve these problems to seem successful, you need only act like you are trying, be willing to spend significant sums, and lobby energetically for still more.

If, on the other hand, you should try to establish what we ultimately plan to *do* with the increasing amounts of weapons-usable fuel, what our long-term strategy is for getting rid of the ruthless governments in Iran and Iraq, or how we might leverage commerce against India's and Pakistan's proliferation and animosity, or pacify China or a unified Korean Peninsula, there will not only be no interest or funding for such efforts, but you will likely be branded an "academic" troublemaker. Such antipathy for real plan-

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ning and genuine strategy is wrong and dangerous. Here Congress can prompt correction simply by finding out what it is getting for its dollars. How much are we spending on non-proliferation programs, where are they funded in the budget, and what is their relation, if any, to achieving non-proliferation victories in countries we care most about? Until the answers are clear, new program starts should stop.

Indeed, there is no substitute for non-proliferation strategies with clear, country-specific objectives.[5] Flailing about the "global threat" that proliferation presents, as this administration is prone to do, may be great theater. It certainly helps deflect critics' demands for the United States to demonstrate effective leadership. But a host of initiatives that raise global expectations but rarely deliver any benefits makes for lousy non-proliferation policy. Certainly, with several non-proliferation successes under our belts, creating ever larger, more grandiose international non-proliferation "regimes" is, at best, a distraction.

We know what works—orchestrating persistent, tailored, leveraging actions with our friends that move better governments toward the right choices and keep the worst from making the wrong ones. This may not be as glamorous or exalted as establishing ever more multilateral forums for the promotion of international non-proliferation norms. But it's much more likely to get results, and it is hardly as difficult to achieve as either the administration or its most cynical critics would suggest. □

[5]See David Andre, "Competitive Strategies: An Approach Against Proliferation", in Henry Sokolski, ed., *Fighting Proliferation: New Concerns for the Nineties* (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 1996).

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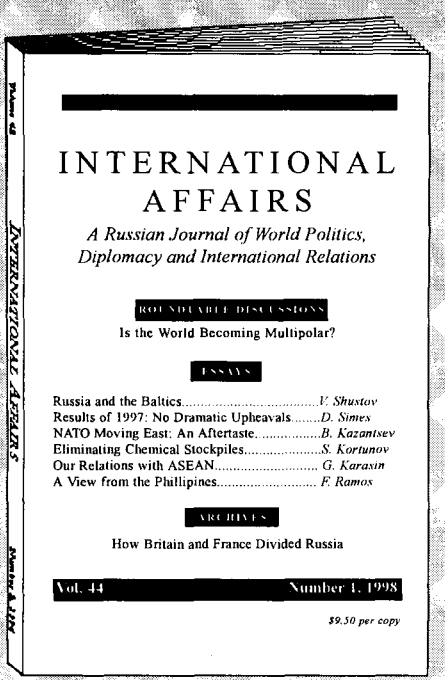
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Rethinking N+1

Brad Roberts

IN APRIL 1961, one of the seminal think-pieces on proliferation appeared. This was Albert Wohlstetter's famous *Foreign Affairs* article analyzing the so-called "N + 1" problem. This formulation was Wohlstetter's way of characterizing the next incremental addition to the existing number of nuclear weapons states. In an elegant analysis focused mainly on the nuclear problem in Europe, he argued that the U.S. nuclear umbrella was the answer to the security needs of NATO's potential next nuclear states. He argued further that disarmament would only fuel Soviet ambitions, but that export controls and modest arms control measures had a role to play in limiting nuclear diffusion.

In this, as in so many other areas, Wohlstetter's ideas helped to shape his generation's thinking about the proliferation problem. But wholly new factors have arisen over the past four decades, and we need to think differently about the issue because the problem itself has changed. We can best see how it has changed by taking separately the two parts of Wohlstetter's simple "N + 1" expression.

First is the "N" factor: the number of existing nuclear-armed states. Today, the policy debate remains focused on the challenge of preventing those two or three states most desirous of joining that number from achieving their ambition. Now, as then, nuclear proliferation presents risks of major importance for international stability and U.S. security. The emergence of a nuclear-armed Iraq, Iran, or North Korea would be deeply unsettling, both regionally and globally. So too would be the leakage of nuclear weapons materials, technology, or expertise to both state and non-state actors. Stopping such proliferation remains a top policy priority, as it was in 1961.

But the nuclear dynamic is more complicated than suggested by "N + 1." There is also an "N - 1" phenomenon. The number of states opting *out* of the nuclear weapons business (South Africa, Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Argentina, and Brazil) is *roughly double* the number working to get in. Moreover, the emergence since 1961 of de facto nuclear weapons states outside the superpower strategic framework (Israel, India, and Pakistan) has not so far changed the world in any fundamental sense, largely because their purposes are understood to be essentially defensive.

The proliferation phenomenon has been further complicated by the increased prominence of elements of the problem other than the nuclear one. Chemical weapons proliferated rapidly in the 1980s, in a process driven largely by their use in the Iran-Iraq war. A spate of biological weapons proliferation followed. But here too the trends are not straightforward. Implementation of the new Chemical Weapons Convention of 1997 is leading to a decrease in the number of states

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armed with such weapons (India and South Korea, for example, have signed the treaty and have promised to destroy their chemical weapons). In the biological area, there seems to be no increase in the number of states possessing or seeking such weapons since the number peaked at about a dozen in the early 1990s. If Iraq's biological warfare program is any indication, the proliferation of the 1990s may not be so much horizontal as vertical—in other words, the problem is now one of an increasing number and quality of such weapons *among* already existing possessors, rather than an increase in the *number* of possessors.

Then there is the rest of the proliferation problem: ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, advanced conventional weaponry, small and light arms, new supplier nations, new risks of non-state actors gaining access to nuclear/biological/chemical weapons (NBC) or technologies. And there is even a new category of concerns over the proliferation of the science and technology base, and the dual-use technologies that go along with it.

To understand these increasingly complex phenomena, analysts continue to reach into the conceptual tool kit assembled by Wohlstetter and others in an earlier generation. But what drove nuclear proliferation in the 1950s and 1960s—major power competition—does not drive the proliferation trends of the 1990s, which result more from the asymmetric strategies of regional powers. Nor does the debate about the consequences of proliferation as framed by Wohlstetter, Kenneth Waltz, and their colleagues capture the full range of present experience. If, for example, as Waltz argued, nuclear proliferation might be stabilizing if it strengthens deterrence among hostile powers, what are we to make of the secret Iraqi biological arsenal that was evidently intended to be used not as a deterrent but as a means of retribution?

IF THE PROBLEM has changed, so too must policy. This brings us to the second part of Wohlstetter's short formula: the "+ 1" part. With a singular focus on the small number of developed states then considering the desirability of independent national "nuclear strike forces", Wohlstetter prescribed a strategy "to abate, delay or control nuclear diffusion", one encompassing an American nuclear guarantee to Europe and integrated alliance nuclear planning, with a bit of arms and export control on the side.

Today, policy must continue to be effective in dealing with the states with nuclear ambitions. These are now typically American adversaries, not allies, a fact that dislodges the centrality of a U.S. nuclear guarantee in non-proliferation strategy. But policy must also be effective in dealing with the increasingly multi-faceted nature of the proliferation problem. Toward this end, many more tools of policy have been created. Supplier restraints in the nuclear domain have been supplemented by similar restraints in the chemical, biological, missile, and conventional weapons domains. Non-proliferation has been supplemented by counter-proliferation. The non-proliferation benefits of arms control are also now more widely appreciated. Despite this profusion of policy instruments, however, their focus remains the "+ 1" problem, which is to say preventing states with weapons ambitions from achieving their aims.

But the diffusion of materials, technologies, and expertise that have both normal commercial and military uses—especially in the areas of mass casualty weapons—has made the policy agenda far more complex. Thanks to this "dual-use" phenomenon, most states now have the ability to make chemical and biological weapons (CBW), and to do so relatively quickly. Many more states than actually possess nuclear weapons have the ability to make them. A key question is what these states with latent weapons capabilities will choose to do with those abilities. Might they hedge against an uncertain future by cultivating those capabilities, perhaps to the point of acquiring virtual arsenals? Might they turn potential into actual possession? If one or two states in a particular region were to do so, would it touch off a domino effect within and

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beyond that region? How can the risks of a wildfire-like weaponization among states with latent technical capabilities be minimized, as they respond simultaneously to a worsening security environment by stepping up the readiness ladder?

ANSWERS TO THESE questions must begin with the recognition that not all potential proliferators have the same motives, or find themselves in comparable circumstances. There are three reasonably distinct types of states whose behavior will matter to the long-term success of non-proliferation: the determined, the dabblers, and the disinterested.[1]

Those states *determined* to possess nuclear, biological, and/or chemical weapons are generally desperate to gain the strategic and operational leverage presumed to derive from them. This is the category most in the public mind today, and not surprisingly so. Examples include the de facto nuclear weapons states plus Iraq and North Korea.

The *dabblers* are those states exploring their weapons potential but that lack an immediately compelling strategic need. They cultivate a scientific base and would move to weapons production and stockpiling under certain circumstances. Examples here are hotly debated, but certainly include Iran and Taiwan. The states that plunged into CBW work following Iraq's examples in the 1980s and 1990s may also be dabblers.

The *disinterested* states are those with neither the programs nor the ambitions to exploit their latent capabilities for weapons purposes. Sometimes those capabilities are substantial. In the nuclear domain, Germany and Japan are prime examples. In the chemical and biological domains, any developed country has a substantial latent ability. Why do so many refrain from exploiting their weapons potential? External guarantees play a role for some. So too does history and politics. Some simply calculate that developing such capabilities would cause more security problems than it would solve.

Let us now look at these three categories more closely, in reverse order.

The disinterested category—happily constituting the vast majority of countries of the world—rarely gets the attention of the non-proliferation community, but these states deserve to be a part of the policy picture for several reasons. First, their latent capability might eventually be translated into weapons prowess—which could have far-reaching consequences, especially if the country in question were a major power such as Germany or Japan. Second, some of these states are what Sandy Spector has called repentant proliferants—that is, states that over the last few decades have formally forsworn nuclear weapons programs after taking initial—and sometimes substantial—steps in that direction. Usually the reversal has followed lengthy debate over what best serves their national interest. (South Africa and Ukraine, after all, make a much more credible case for the virtues of nuclear non-possession than does the rhetoric of those that determinedly continue to be nuclear weapons states.) Third, some are states that have prospered even in a generally insecure international environment without resort to *any* major armaments programs. Costa Rica is perhaps the best example here, and a model for others—after all, it has no military forces and did not create them even when its neighbors Nicaragua and Panama were in deep crisis.

There are yet other reasons to fit these states into the non-proliferation equation. Many of them are the recipients, conduits, and even generators of militarily sensitive technologies. Because they are so numerous, their participation in the international effort to prevent those technologies from reaching states with weapons ambitions is essential. Relatedly, the weapons-disinterested states must be active in the promulgation of the international norms

[1]Editor's note: Used here in the primary (though often considered incorrect) *Oxford English Dictionary* meaning of "disinterest": "Absence of interest, unconcern."

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about weapons and war and in the implementation of the multilateral treaty regimes embodying these norms. Without their participation, the international consensus against proliferation would be limited to a few countries mostly in the developed world.

The dabblers are states reported or reputed to have weapons development programs, but not compelling reasons for actually acquiring the weapons. These states are not motivated by immediate fears for their national survival. Some may have substantial weapons programs that have gained momentum largely on the basis of domestic political and bureaucratic factors. Some of these programs seem to have paused at certain thresholds related to weaponization, serial production, or declaratory policy, and today face an uncertain future as national leaders debate the evolution of national military capabilities—a process obviously contingent on political perceptions and external factors. Because states do not publicize these programs, it is difficult to gauge how numerous they may be. But they deserve to be in the non-proliferation equation because changes in security conditions can give rise to rapid movement toward unconventional weapons capabilities on their part. The speed with which such developments could occur is itself a source of worry, for there is nothing like an acute perception of time pressure to evoke a series of bad judgments.

Yet the policy debate focuses almost entirely on the third category—the determined proliferators. These are states whose leaders appear absolutely determined to achieve an unconventional weapons capability, or to continue improving one already attained, and who do so despite high costs and risks, due to some perceived overwhelming national interest.

In the U.S. policy debate, each tool of policy is scrutinized for what it contributes to preventing the success of the determined proliferator. Very often, the relevance and contributions of each tool to the other two categories of states is ignored. Arms control approaches are not likely to be especially effective for dealing with the determined proliferator, but they are valuable for enlisting the weapons-disinterested states as political partners in the non-proliferation effort, and indispensable for creating incentives for the contingent proliferator to abandon programs lacking an overriding strategic purpose. Export control approaches have a similar role in imposing costs on the dabblers and promoting cooperation among like-minded states, even if they are not always reliable in keeping sensitive technologies out of the hands of proliferators. Counter-proliferation, which is to say the strengthening of the U.S. ability to fight and prevail in regional wars in which aggressors threaten or use NBC weapons, is essential for creating yet more disincentives for the dabblers and the determined proliferators. It is also essential for reassuring those whose disinterest in acquiring NBC counters of their own depends to some extent on credible U.S. guarantees.

HOWEVER MUCH we may long for the tidiness embodied in Wohlstetter's "N + 1" concept, it is beyond our power to recreate the world of 1961. Enlisting the disinterested states and creating incentives for the dabblers to abandon their programs, or at least to remain under the threshold of weaponization, are as important to the long-term success of non-proliferation as is preventing North Korea, Iraq, and Iran from achieving their nuclear ambitions.

Yet the government as a whole still lacks an agenda that effectively encompasses the many facets of the proliferation problem. To be sure, it has an agenda—and as argued above, an increasingly broad one. Lots of bureaus, agencies, and departments are working the proliferation problem with myriad programs and policies. But there are signs that all this effort is not particularly well orchestrated. For example, absorption of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency into the Department of State has reinforced the tendency to narrow the non-proliferation emphasis to the "rogue states", and to submerge arms control and non-proliferation

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issues in relations with the dabblers and disinterested states into the larger bilateral dialogue. As another example, the disputes about weapons programs in Iraq and North Korea graphically illustrate the fact that government is better at creating anti-proliferation instruments than at enforcing them. On the more positive side, after an early bureaucratic feud that left the impression that the effort to prevent proliferation was going to be abandoned in favor of an effort to cope with its consequences militarily, there is now widespread agreement that counter-proliferation and non-proliferation are complementary.

A more integrated and effective strategy cannot be won simply by creating new organizational structures or appointing a new proliferation czar. The chief deficiency of policy is not bureaucratic but political. Everyone working the problem in government understands that preventing proliferation is important but there is no generally accepted sense of why and how all the pieces of policy are supposed to fit together. The principles and purposes of U.S. policy remain set out in largely Wohlstetter-like terms. This reinforces the tendency to equate proliferation policy with nuclear non-proliferation. It also reinforces the tendency to treat non-proliferation as a discrete and separable policy problem, when in fact it cuts across large segments of American foreign and defense policy and can be dealt with effectively only as an integral component. Policy could be made more effective if someone in the bully pulpit would restate the principles and purposes of policy, define the components of American strategy, and identify the synergies among policy instruments. Without such a strategic perspective, there is no way to decide where proliferation fits in U.S. priorities in any given instance, how to handle conflicting policy interests as they arise, or how to determine sensible budgetary allocations among the various agencies.

The absence of a strategic perspective also brings with it a political cost. Without a sense of why and how the elements of policy fit together, individual pieces are vulnerable to poaching. Each piece has its strong critics (often with views firmly rooted in Cold War-vintage strategic perspectives). Some see arms control as a sellout of the national interest; others see counter-proliferation as an abandonment of the pure principle of non-proliferation. Some argue that the proliferation problem has been exaggerated, and that American power is sufficient in its "unipolar moment" to pay less rather than more attention to proliferation; others, contrarily, think things are so bad that we should jettison non-proliferation efforts altogether and instead prepare urgently for a world in which such weapons are widely proliferated and actually used.

But U.S. interests are best served by husbanding all of the tools of policy that have been developed over the years because, again, particular tools are relevant to different parts of the problem. The synergies among these tools, too, may be as important as the contributions they can make singly. Arms control is necessary if export controls are to be effectively coordinated among the growing number of supplier states. Arms control regimes can also help legitimize certain types of enforcement actions against proliferators, including coercive actions. Counter-proliferation capabilities are needed to deter, defeat, and punish the users of weapons of mass destruction and thus to deny them the coercive value of threats deriving from those weapons.

It is legitimate to ask whether the United States is capable of pursuing so comprehensive an agenda in an era of increasing partisanship over foreign policy. The attack on administration policy has been continuous. Not obliged to offer a strategic perspective of their own, administration critics can subject every instrument of policy to the hardest test (the determined proliferator test), and shine a bright light on its shortcomings. They have made a lot of headway. On balance, this sort of bureaucratic potshotting works against the national interest by weakening the political foundations necessary for implementing negotiated instruments, enforcing existing obligations, and building the right kinds of military

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forces at the same time. American leadership of the non-proliferation effort is no longer taken for granted by our historic partners in this process—and certainly not by some of our most dangerous potential opponents.

Re-reading Albert Wohlstetter's 1961 article reminds one of how much the world has changed over four decades. It is a reminder that potential proliferators are not few but many, as most states have been empowered by economic and technical developments to build quickly high-leverage weaponry with impressive strategic reach. It is also a reminder of the diminishing capacity of the United States to achieve non-proliferation results internationally by extending a security guarantee or two, or by orchestrating a few trade restraints.

Perhaps there is virtue in the necessity of engaging ever broader international coalitions in the fight against proliferation, for the best way to prevent states from hedging against uncertain futures is to enlist them in creating stable ones. Recognizing that necessity points to new leadership requirements for a United States whose place and role have changed, but whose leadership remains essential to the larger international effort. On the necessity of American leadership in this portentous policy area, a re-reading of Wohlstetter's article also reminds us of what has not changed over the years, and is not likely to either. □

British Understatement

Wipe that smile off your face, brother. The 1997 election was historic, all right: a great historic defeat for socialism. Victory was achieved by the first Labour leader in 80 years who does not even pretend to be a socialist, who can scarcely conceal his loathing of most of his party's emotional roots, from the unions to the Celtic fringe to the left, and who does not bother to call himself a man of the left. (He is a 'radical centrist', whatever that may be.) He has rejected the core beliefs which have distinguished left-of-centre politics throughout this century and throughout the world: economic planning and redistributive taxation. . . .

Wipe that smile off your face, sister. The canonisation of St. Diana painfully illustrates the decline of feminism—of rational political feminism, that is. Did Mary Wollstonecraft and Emily Pankhurst live for this: the adulation of a hysterical and self-pitying pin-up, as intellectually dense as she was emotionally manipulative? . . .

If the election of 1997 was a historic defeat for British socialism, the elevation of Diana as a populist heroine illustrates more broadly and even more starkly the bankruptcy of the political left. Tony Blair's 'people's princess' was not merely fatuous. To anyone of the traditional left it would have seemed as offensively oxymoronic as the claim (made in television interview) by Ian Corfield of the Fabian Society that Diana was loved because she represented a 'genuine feeling of meritocracy.' She did *what*? The daughter of a rich dipsomaniac earl, and whose highest academic achievement was a school prize for best-kept hamster, who married a prince, and who died during (and in a sense because of) a liaison with a coke-snorting, starlet bonking playboy?

—Geoffrey Wheatcroft, *Prospect* (January 1998)

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Poll*ution*

Humphrey Taylor

IN THE CLOSING weeks of the 1972 presidential election, I was a witness to a bizarre attempt by the Nixon campaign to pressure the Harris Poll, in order to influence our published numbers. Chuck Colson, one of the Nixon aides who later served time in prison because of Watergate, called to tell us that the peace negotiations with North Vietnam were at a very critical stage. The North Vietnamese, he assured us, were following the polls very closely. If they saw Nixon's lead slipping, they would probably wait on the possibility of a McGovern victory. If Nixon maintained his big lead, there was a good chance they would agree to peace terms with Nixon before the election. Tough pressure on a pollster. Fortunately, Nixon's lead did hold up, so we didn't have to feel guilty for his failure to get a peace treaty before the election.

Unfortunately, attempts to manipulate and corrupt the polls are now a serious worldwide phenomenon. The spread of democracy and free elections around the world has brought to power a new generation of political leaders who are learning a painful truth: What democracy giveth it can also take away. Those who win by the ballot box can also lose by it, and freely elected governments are often defeated in the next free election. Because of this, some of them are tempted to tilt the electoral playing field, to manipulate the press, to make elections less free and fair, and, on occasion, to stuff ballot boxes and steal elections.

However, it is harder for incumbents to steal elections if there are honest, accurate, and publicly reported pre-election opinion polls and exit polls that show someone else to be well ahead. One surprising and alarming new trend is that in many countries, governments, politicians, business interests, and even the media are using their power to manipulate and suppress the publication of honest opinion polls. To their surprise, many pollsters find themselves in the unexpected role of champions of civil rights and bastions of democracy. This also puts honest pollsters at great risk from those who want to corrupt the political process. Those who play along get rich; those who don't may get badly hurt. The pressures they face make Richard Nixon's earlier attempts at control look like softball.

As an example, consider Mexico. On a recent visit there, I discussed this problem with several potential presidential candidates, senior members of the three main political parties, a senator, two governors, pollsters, and two very influential journalists. Most confirmed, and none denied, that all of the following have occurred within the last year:

• The media quoted poll results that were wildly inaccurate, either because the numbers were changed or because the polls had never actually been conducted. Some poll clients are willing to pay handsomely for phony polls.

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• Honest, independent poll findings were suppressed by the media because they displeased the powerful.

• Polling firms who did not provide their clients with poll numbers they liked (and who were unwilling to change real numbers to fictional ones) were sometimes not paid.

• Contracts for multiple polls—for both the media and politicians—with honest polling firms were canceled because the clients did not like the numbers shown in the early polls and the polling firms would not change them.

• Some courageous media executives suffered (for example, one lost his job) because they had published honest polls.

This is not just hearsay; I have seen some of the canceled contracts and the polls that were suppressed. Nor are these attempts to mislead the public with phony polls and the censorship of honest ones unique to Mexico—I have heard similar reports from many other countries, most recently from sources I trust in Taiwan, the Philippines, and Ecuador.

In fairness I should note that similar abuses have occurred in Western countries in the recent past. In a famous case in the 1970s, a French cabinet minister persuaded a leading French polling firm to reduce the number of people who were reported to be hostile to immigrants.

In Britain in the early 1970s, Labour leader Harold Wilson was guilty of a mean-spirited intervention that affected me personally. My firm, which I had recently sold to Louis Harris and Associates, had launched what I believe was the first regular poll jointly sponsored by a television channel and a newspaper (the CBS/*New York Times* poll followed later). Our ITN/*Times* (of London) poll was a great success; both our clients were delighted with it. But Harold Wilson was furious. How dare ITN, the news channel he trusted much more than the BBC, get into bed with the *Times* (then edited by William Rees-Mogg, whose editorials encouraged the soon-to-follow departure of Roy Jenkins and the "Gang of Four" from Labour)! Wilson sent Labour MP Gerald Kaufman to persuade the ITN management to end the affair; they refused. Wilson then nobbled two ITN board members who persuaded the board to vote to end it. As a result, a high quality, well-regarded—and truly independent—regular poll bit the dust.

After the 1972 election, President Nixon asked two of his top aides to "influence" the Gallup and Harris Polls, particularly their data on Vietnam and Watergate. Fortunately, there is no evidence that Nixon succeeded. Both polls showed the public swinging strongly against Nixon on both issues, and these polls may well have had some influence on critical congressional votes against him.

In 1994, Frank Luntz, a well-known Republican consultant, persuaded the American media to run stories saying that his polls found 60 percent of the public supporting every element of the Contract with America. Last June, long after the election, it emerged that there were no such polls, and Luntz was formally censored by the American Association of Public Opinion Research. This rebuke will probably have no impact on him or the use of his services by political candidates.

IN THE UNITED STATES, Canada, and Europe, there is less need for concern about the manipulation of election-related polls than there is in the case of new democracies. But there should be much concern about the increasing use of "advocacy polls" in the West. Trade associations, special interests, lobbying groups, and even individual companies frequently commission polls designed not to inform but to persuade. The questions are often tailored to produce the answers clients want, and the replies are cherry-picked with only the most supportive data being released.

For those who consider opinion polls to be a disagreeable newcomer to the political process, who believe they have a malign effect, or who dismiss them as frivolous or insignificant, all this may be treated as of no consequence. But the truth is that polls now play an important part in the political

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process—otherwise people would not try to manipulate them. Contrary to much popular belief, there is firm evidence that polls do not cause a bandwagon effect, with voters rushing to support the front-runner. But they do influence the political agenda, the financial support candidates can amass, the media coverage of issues and candidates, and votes in the relevant legislature. A president or prime minister with high poll ratings can influence the legislature much more readily than one with low ratings. Members of Congress are avid poll readers. Indeed, a worldwide review suggests that the frequent publication of independent polls, not controlled or influenced by the government or powerful interests, makes a valuable contribution to the democratic process. Where corrupt polls mislead, good independent polls inform.

It is no surprise, then, that military dictatorships, communist governments, and other authoritarian regimes have never allowed free independent political polls in their countries. The truth would hurt them. Most real democracies allow opinion polls complete freedom (although, to their shame, thirty countries, including France and Italy, have banned their publication in the closing weeks or days of electoral campaigns). As for countries that are becoming more democratic, such as Mexico, the main defense against the corruption of opinion polling lies with the media. If local media can expose abuses, they can sharply reduce them. And if the media in such countries are themselves subject to intimidation, the international media, particularly those of the United States, can exert considerable influence. Most governments and politicians care about how the international media portray them. They want to be viewed as true democrats, not as corrupt officials clinging to power through manipulation and fraud. Local leaders and the media will repeat reports from leading U.S. and European newspapers. The same dynamic even works for fully fledged democracies. It was, for example, a British, not a French, paper that exposed the above-mentioned manipulation of the polls in France.

One thing is certain: If the media do not report the manipulation of the polls things will get worse. And, sadly, the local media in many newly democratic countries will be too timid to report such manipulation unless the American media and international media make it an issue first. □

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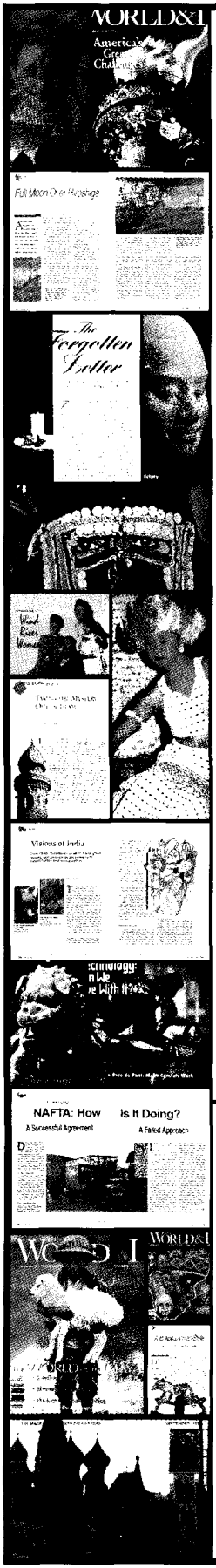

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The Khatemi Factor

How Much Does It Matter?

Mark N. Katz

SINCE EARLY LAST YEAR, an increasing number of voices have been calling for the relaxation of U.S. economic sanctions against Iran and, indeed, for a general ratcheting down of the U.S. effort to isolate Iran diplomatically. These have not been just any voices: Very senior former U.S. government officials have been involved, including former National Security Advisers Zbigniew Brzezinski and Brent Scowcroft, and former Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs Richard Murphy.[1] Similar pronouncements have been made by former Ambassadors David Mack and William Rugh, by Rep. Lee Hamilton (senior Democrat on the House International Relations Committee), and by former National Security Council staffer Richard Haass (now director of foreign policy studies at the Brookings Institution) among many others.[2] Many if not most of these ministrations, it is worth noting, were voiced before the election of Mohammed Khatemi to the Iranian presidency this past summer.

Those arguing for a relaxation of sanctions have done so on several grounds. First, they point out that while American sanctions against Iran have exacted some pain over the nearly two decades in which they have been in effect, they have clearly failed to bring the Islamic Republic to its knees, and appear unlikely to do so in the future. Indeed, they may even retard change by enabling the clerical leadership more easily to demonize the United States in the eyes of the Iranian people. Second, they argue that U.S. sanctions have not stopped Iran from supporting terrorism abroad, attacking the Arab-Israeli peace process, or pursuing weapons of mass destruction. Third, critics point out that since they are unilateral, American sanctions have not prevented the mullahs from selling all the oil they wish to Western Europe and Japan; fourth, that by penalizing foreign firms that invest in the Iranian petroleum sector, the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act of 1996 has irritated relations with our most important Western allies far more than it has irritated Iran. Fifth, several observers—not least among them Frederick Starr writing in these pages last spring—noted that American success in pre-

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[1]Zbigniew Brzezinski, Brent Scowcroft, and Richard Murphy, "Differentiated Containment", *Foreign Affairs* (May/June 1997). See also their *Differentiated Containment: U.S. Policy Toward Iran and Iraq* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1997).

[2]See Thomas W. Lippman, "Critics Want U.S. to Reevaluate 'Dual Containment' Policy on Iran and Iraq", *Washington Post*, December 7, 1997; and Richard N. Haass, "Sanctioning Madness", *Foreign Affairs* (November/December 1997). Other former officials making similar arguments include William Quandt, Gary Sick, and Graham E. Fuller.

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venting the newly independent states of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan from exporting their oil and gas via Iran (the cheapest route) only heightened the exposure of both their valuable resources and their political autonomy to an unstable and mendacious Russia.[3] Sixth, several observers complained that sanctions had the effect of benefiting U.S. commercial rivals that otherwise would not have had such an easy time—the French Total deal with Iran being a good case in point. Finally, some observers called for improving U.S.-Iranian relations as a means of accruing leverage against Iraq, a country that, at least for the time being, arguably represents a greater threat to U.S. and allied interests than does Iran.[4]

Taken together, these arguments seemed to many analysts in and out of government to make a good deal of sense, if for no other reason than that they satisfied a desire to bring the full range of American geopolitical assets back into play. Throughout the first half of 1997 the case for change began to catch on, and there arose an expectation that the sheer weight of the logic being tossed about would sooner or later induce significant adjustment in U.S. policy toward Iran.[5]

But until quite recently, the critique of U.S. policy toward Iran did not produce such a change, and the reason is very instructive. It is that the actual state of Iranian-American relations and the detailed evaluation of available diplomatic options for maneuver has mattered a great deal less than where Iran is seen to fit within the overall pattern of American relations with revolutionary states. The simple truth is that the particulars of the Iranian case pale before the general disposition of U.S. attitudes toward those we deem ideological troublemakers. For better or for worse, the U.S. government does not make decisions about such countries on the merits, but rather on the basis of broadly prudential and moral categories.[6]

Both the U.S. government and the American public in general do not like nondemocratic revolutionary regimes that are hostile toward America and its liberal values. Especially as a result of its takeover of the U.S. embassy in Tehran in November 1979 and the ensuing hostage crisis, Iran has been particularly disliked by Americans. But except under highly unusual circumstances, dislike of such regimes does not translate into a policy of armed intervention against them. Since Vietnam, Congress and the American public have been willing to support the use of force against anti-American regimes only if they invade states that are important to us (as when Iraq invaded Kuwait), or if they are so weak that we can overwhelm them in a day or two without incurring more than a handful of casualties (as in Grenada). As much as we dislike the Islamic Republic, it does not qualify on either of these grounds.[7]

While reluctant to engage in military conflict with revolutionary regimes, however, Americans have been downright eager to wage economic warfare against them. Democrats and Republicans alike love to impose sanctions against various non-democratic regimes, though they sometimes differ over which countries to target. The U.S.

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[3]S. Frederick Starr, "Power Failure in the Caspian", *The National Interest* (Spring 1997).

[4]See, for example, William Rugh, "Time to Modify Our Gulf Policy", *Middle East Policy* (January 1997).

[5]In truth, the case made in 1997 for a change in U.S. policy toward Iran was not flawless. It was one thing—and, on reflection, not a hard thing given the fanaticism of the Islamic Republic—to conclude that unilateral economic sanctions could not force core changes in Iranian foreign policy, quite another to reason that the only alternative was to *relax* pressures in order to bring about those changes.

[6]For more on U.S. policy toward revolutionary regimes, see my *Revolutions and Revolutionary Waves* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), chapter 5.

[7]Iran does occupy three small islands in the Gulf claimed by the United Arab Emirates. It was not the Islamic Republic that first seized them, however, but our friend the Shah in 1971.

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government imposed new economic sanctions against 35 countries in the short period from 1993 to 1996 alone.

UNTIL VERY RECENTLY, Iran has not been an exception to this pattern. That it might now be in the process of becoming one is explained by a second pattern that characterizes American dealings with revolutionary regimes: Once sanctions have been imposed, neither the U.S. government nor the American public has been willing to relax them and improve relations with revolutionary regimes, *except in three specific situations.*

First, Washington has shown a willingness to improve relations with revolutionary regimes that threaten vital U.S. interests. The classic case, of course, was the pursuit of détente with the Soviet Union. When U.S. policymakers believed the USSR to have achieved coequal or superior nuclear and conventional military forces, and when Moscow was doing more to support Marxist movements in the Third World than it ever had before, Washington saw fit to engage the Soviet Union diplomatically even in the overall framework of containment (which, after the U.S. withdrawal from Indochina, Washington did not vigorously pursue in the Third World until the implementation of the Reagan Doctrine). A more recent example, and one more comparable in scale to the case of Iran, is the U.S. response in 1994 to the development of nuclear weapons by North Korea. The United States offered Pyongyang a generous aid package in exchange for halting its weapons program, something we never would have considered doing had Pyongyang not acquired nukes.

Second, we have been willing to improve relations with revolutionary regimes we used to revile if a common threat to us both emerged. The classic case in this instance was the dramatic if belated change in America's relationship with China in the early 1970s. Although Washington had justifiably viewed China as more rabidly revolutionary than the USSR during the 1960s, Chinese and American fears of Moscow led to close cooperation between Washington and Beijing from 1972 through the end of the Cold War. More recently, the growing sense that China is becoming a threat to its neighbors appears to be one factor providing the basis for an emerging rapprochement between Washington and Hanoi.

Third, we have been willing to embrace any revolutionary regime that denounces its past and swears allegiance to democracy and capitalism. We will do so even if basically the same people remain in power, even if they limit democratization at their whim, and even if it is apparent that they regard "capitalism" as merely a way to turn state enterprises into their own personal property—as is now occurring in so many former communist countries.

The United States has been resolutely unwilling to improve relations with revolutionary regimes if they do not fall into one of these three categories. Never mind if the policy makes no sense in a changed context, or is plainly counterproductive—as has been the case with U.S. policy toward Cuba for at least a decade. If a revolutionary regime doesn't really threaten the United States, or there is no perceived common threat, then no urgency is felt to improve relations with it; and if it will not play the role of repentant prodigal son, then (despite what foreign policy experts may advise on the merits of the case at hand) the American polity as a whole is unwilling—even generically unable—to improve relations with it. On the other hand, should the conditions of such a regime change so as to place it within one of these three categories, it is very likely that the United States will reassess its policy and move to improve relations.

Such a change has now happened—or seems to have happened—in the case of Iran. Not that the Islamic Republic falls plainly and unmistakably into one or the other of the three categories; rather it seems to fall a little into all three.

First, Iran has become more dangerous because it has come ever closer to a nuclear weapons capability—with no little thanks to

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Russian help. Of course, those who have worked hardest to keep Iran sanctioned and isolated have done more than any others to emphasize this fact. What they fail to grasp, however, is that, according to precedent, to the extent they succeed in convincing Americans of the Iranian nuclear danger, they undermine the effort to isolate Tehran. That is the unmistakable pattern of U.S. diplomacy.

Second, not long after revelations of Iranian progress toward nuclear weapons hit the street, Iraq re-emerged as a palpable threat. The crisis that began on October 29, 1997, and has yet to really end, has clearly kindled U.S. interest in using Iran as a counter to Iraq. *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman illustrated such thinking in a January 6 essay entitled "A One-Word Strategy"—and that one word was Iran. "If Washington isn't going to play military hardball with Iraq", he wrote, "it should at least play diplomatic hardball. . . . [T]hink of the benefits: Saddam would be further isolated and Syria's President, Hafez al-Assad, would be too." There is also the other side of the coin, namely, the possibility that the Iranian leadership is more frightened of Saddam now than it was six or eight months ago. After all, when Secretary of Defense William Cohen held up that famous five-pound bag of sugar and asked us to pretend for a moment that it was anthrax, the Iranians were doubtlessly in his extended audience. While they have always understood Saddam's capacity for evil, their intelligence capabilities are not as sophisticated as those of the United States; perhaps they too experienced a slight shock at recent revelations of Iraq's residual germ warfare stocks.

AND THEN THERE is the Khatemi factor. Mohammed Khatemi, a moderate cleric by Iranian standards, won Iran's presidential election in May by a landslide. This he did against all expectations—and clearly against the wishes of Iran's ruling circle. That election definitely got Washington's attention. The *Washington Post* first broke the story—albeit perhaps in exaggerated form—on January 9 that, not long after Khatemi's inauguration last August, the Clinton administration sent a message through the Swiss ambassador in Tehran suggesting the opening of a new U.S.-Iranian dialogue.[8] Khatemi's December 14 news conference and his CNN interview on January 7 appear to have been the response to that message. In the CNN interview, Khatemi praised the American people and its devotion to liberty, and averred that Iran had something to learn from the West and something to gain from more contact with it—though not with the U.S. government. "Not only do we not harbor any ill wishes for the American people, but in fact we consider them to be a great nation", he said.

We would, of course, love to have the Iranian government renounce its revolutionary past and seek friendship with the United States. So far that has not happened. Nor is it likely to happen so long as the clerics run the show. While opposition to the regime exists, the Islamic Republic will not be overthrown any time soon. But what Khatemi said is very significant, and remains so despite the fact that several subsequent remarks he has made have been less encouraging. The touchstone of Iran's revolutionary ideology under the Ayatollah Khomeini was that any dealing with America was tantamount to contamination. Khomeini's was essentially a "two camps" theory. Khatemi, by saying that cultural and personal contact between the two societies is a positive thing, and that Iran has something to learn from America and the West, overthrew that cardinal precept. In a country like Iran (as with the Soviet Union), where pronouncements on foreign policy have a canonical character, this is a major event.

So, within a fairly short period, Iran has seemed to grow more dangerous, more useful as a tactical ally against the phoenix-like menace of Iraq, and less ideologically disagreeable.

[8]Barton G. Gellman, "U.S. Proposed Direct Talks in Overture to Iran", *Washington Post*, January 9, 1998.

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It may well be that Iran is still not *very* dangerous, that its weight cannot be used effectively against Iraq, and that the ayatollahs hope to give much less than they get back in any diplomatic exchanges with Washington (it would, let it be said, be unusual and unprofessional if they did not). It may be, too, that since President Khatemi's power remains subordinate to that of Ayatollah Khamenei, Iran cannot deliver significant changes in its foreign policy in any event. And even if Khatemi is sincere and gains the leverage he needs to implement changes in Iranian policies, it may be a year or more before we see results—as was the case, it should be recalled, even with Mikhail Gorbachev's "new thinking."

But, again, the facts don't matter as much as the categorical shift that seems to have been occasioned by recent events. U.S. policy may be changing now either prematurely or for the wrong reasons; indeed, some argue that apparent changes in the Iranian attitude are the result of U.S. sanctions starting to bite, and that now is certainly not the time to let down our guard until we have proof of changes in Iranian behavior in those areas that matter most to us: weapons proliferation, terrorism, and attacks on the Arab-Israeli peace process.[9] But just as the seeming merits of the case alone couldn't move U.S. policy before recent "category" changes, so the merits—or demerits—of the case cannot stop a policy shift now that those changes have occurred and the threshold of the American disposition toward Iran has been breached.

SO WHAT NEXT? It follows that if Iran seems to get more dangerous, more useful as a balance against a common adversary, and more mellow ideologically, U.S. policy toward Iran will react accordingly. What are the prospects, then, for a further thaw?

Iran could well develop nuclear weapons in the near future—say within the next three years. After all, if a state as poor as North Korea can build a bomb and reap diplomatic and other dividends from it, a much richer one such as Iran can do so to similar effect, and Tehran must certainly have drawn such a conclusion. Washington will have little choice but to become as attentive and solicitous toward Iran as it has been toward North Korea. Who knows?—the United States, along with its friends, just might build a nuclear reactor for Iran, too.

As frightening as the development of nuclear or biological weapons by Iran might be, a possibility just as frightening, if different, would be the emergence of a threat so powerful that Washington and Tehran would put aside their differences to ally against it. Such a threat, of course, would have to be powerful and protracted in order to affect a basic change in U.S.-Iranian relations. Even a mutual antipathy toward Saddam Hussein may not be sufficient, especially if—as is devoutly to be hoped—Saddam is not around to trouble us for another whole decade.

But there are other candidates. One is the emergence of a vengefully nationalist and anti-American post-Yeltsin Russia ruled by someone like Alexander Lebed, Gennady Zyuganov, or Vladimir Zhirinovsky. Possibly after doing away with the Duma, but possibly with its enthusiastic support, such a leader might seek the return of the non-Russian republics—and their petroleum reserves—to Moscow's firm control. Since a belligerent Russia could hold hostage the oil flow from the Caucasus and Central Asia through its own territory, and act to block it from crossing the Caspian (from Central Asia to Azerbaijan) and Georgia (from Azerbaijan to the Black Sea), Washington might conclude that the safest as well as the cheapest route for this oil is through Iran. Under these circumstances, Iran might well be the happy recipient of the transit revenue and, more importantly, would share a strong interest with the United States in preserving the inde-

[9]For example, Peter W. Rodman, "Dialogue With Iran?", *Washington Post*, December 24, 1997; and Patrick Clawson, "Khatemi's Dialogue with America, Not Washington", *Policywatch*, January 8, 1998.

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pendence of the countries to its north. Just as President Nixon responded to a Soviet Union that appeared to be growing stronger and more threatening by pursuing détente with Moscow while at the same time allying with Beijing against it, the U.S. response to a Russia that was threatening its southern neighbors might once again be to try to improve relations with Moscow while simultaneously working with Tehran against it.

A second scenario that could lead to an overt alliance between Washington and Tehran would be an Islamic fundamentalist revolution in Saudi Arabia. Superficially, it might appear that in such circumstances Iran would ally with an Islamic fundamentalist Arabia against America. That, however, would be highly unlikely. An Islamic revolution in Saudi Arabia would in all probability be led by Sunnis, and a Sunni fundamentalist Arabia would never defer to Shi'a Iran. Should they come to power, Sunni fundamentalists in Arabia are far more likely to compete with Iran for influence in the Islamic world than to cooperate with it. Indeed, a Sunni fundamentalist Arabia would threaten Iran's standing within the Islamic revolutionary movement, and could threaten Iran itself if it inspired the large—and largely disenfranchised—15 percent of Iran's population that is Sunni. The threat to Iran that would be posed by a fundamentalist revolution in Saudi Arabia is well illustrated in microcosm by Tehran's acute hostility toward the Sunni Taliban government in Afghanistan. Also well illustrated is the propensity of that threat to drive Iran into common cause with the United States: Iran sits together with the United States in a UN-sponsored committee on ending the war in Afghanistan that is, for all practical purposes, an anti-Taliban effort.

Finally, what of the possibility of further moderation in Iranian ideology? It seems real enough. President Khatemi is riding a wave of genuine popularity and his challenge to the reigning theocratic leadership is strengthened by an attack from another direction—namely from Iran's most respected Shi'a clergy, some of whom have argued that the current leadership should step away from direct rule. That the supreme leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, is being attacked from the unimpeachable religious core of Shi'a Islam makes it easier for Khatemi to challenge him on political and foreign policy grounds. Change is in the air, and it could be dramatic—but this is speculative and, as suggested above, both the timetable and the actual policy implications are impossible to specify.

What is clear, however, is that Iranian-American relations were never going to improve markedly until Iran got more dangerous, seemed to renounce revolutionary Islam or some pertinent part of it, or was thrown together with the United States by a common threat. Now that some of all three of these things seems to have happened, we find ourselves moving away from our old policy but, with the changes still so ambiguous, we have not yet arrived at a new one. Nor will we unless there is decisive change in Iran or the region for better, or, more probably, for worse. □

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Korea: A Time to be Bold?

Michael J. Mazarr

PITY POOR KOREA—and not, anymore, just the brooding North. On both sides of the feared demilitarized zone (DMZ), trends have taken a sharp turn for the worse. Start with Seoul: When the Asian financial crisis washed over it, South Korea's economy simply collapsed. The won lost more than half its value against the dollar, the Seoul stock market plunged 70 percent, and the crisis laid bare the cruel fact that South Korea resides on the edge of bankruptcy, and will remain there for some time to come. The country reportedly has more than $150 billion in foreign debt coming due in the next year or two, and just a few billion in currency reserves to pay it back.[1]

On the political front, the December election of opposition candidate Kim Dae Jung was a triumph for South Korean democracy. (In a move delicious for its symbolism, North Korea angrily refused to allow South Korean contract workers in the North to cast absentee ballots, calling the act an infringement of its sovereignty.) But Kim's party is a minority in the National Assembly, the urgent need for painful reform confronts his left-leaning political base, and South Korean politics may well be stuck in an erratic period of realignment for some time. Gridlock, and resulting political unrest, are hardly out of the question.

Now shift your gaze north. Between floods, droughts, typhoons, and tidal waves, North Korea has endured one of the worst series of natural disasters visited on a country in recent memory. Each successive calamity, layered on top of the foundational catastrophe that is the North Korean economy, has inched the regime in Pyongyang closer to its inevitable ruin. The latest word from the World Food Program is that, in order to forestall the starvation of as much as a third of the North's population in 1998, the international community needs to spend almost $400 million to pump three-quarters of a million tons of food into the North. Things have gotten so bad that in December power shortages forced Pyongyang to suspend operation of the speakers near the DMZ that blare absurd propaganda into the South.

The ingredients are therefore all in place for serious instability on the Korean Peninsula, something that is not to be welcomed in the most militarized region on

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[1]Partly because the IMF's $57 billion bailout has not met South Korea's needs, its officials are hurriedly renegotiating portions of the debt. Domestically, its major companies hold debt loads averaging four times equity, and some estimates place the number of dud loans held by Korean banks at upwards of 25 percent of GDP. By comparison, the U.S. savings and loan crisis involved about 3 percent of GDP in bad loans.

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earth. Yet on the central strategic issue at hand—dealing with the North Korean threat—the past few months have done nothing to relieve the distinct impression that Washington and Seoul have abdicated responsibility for North Korea policy and left it to be determined by fate. Apart from routine exchanges resulting from the 1994 Agreed Framework and listless four-party talks about talks on the subject of a peace treaty, the sum total of U.S. and South Korean action on the North amounts to offering a few bags of rice and hoping that Pyongyang will make the first move toward better relations. U.S. officials have repeated the phrase "The ball is in North Korea's court" so many times that it might as well be tattooed on their foreheads.

Early hopes that Kim Dae Jung would dash into office with a bag full of ideas for enhanced North-South contact, beginning with a quick summit, seem to have been misplaced. Kim recently told IMF head Michel Camdessus that "I will not rush" to improve relations with the North, and that he would focus instead on economic issues. Aides quoted Kim as saying that, "If North Korea proposes to hold talks, we will respond. But if they don't, we won't."[2]

Meanwhile, the North simmers. Famine persists and the risk of war through accident or miscalculation lingers. As always, the North's million-man army is poised across the demilitarized zone, just a cannon shell's throw from Seoul.

FOR SEVERAL YEARS, the American and South Korean approach to North Korea has been of two minds—or, perhaps more accurately, many minds. One can think of policy toward the North as a set of Russian *matroshka* figures, wooden dolls successively nestled inside each other. The outermost layer—the face the policy shows to the world and its top public priority—is the unassailable touchstone of "deterrence." Washington and Seoul seek to prevent the North from attacking the South, from building nuclear weapons, and from deploying or selling mid- and long-range ballistic missiles.

In some policy contexts, deterrence can imply boldness and energy. This is not the case with respect to North Korea, where a strategic foundation of negation and defensiveness engenders limp and insubstantial policy, in part because deterrence constitutes a de facto veto of other possible approaches. Thus, obsessed with deterrence, we cannot give the North much food aid because it might go to the army; and we cannot allow foreign investment because it might provide hard currency for new bullets and bombs.

Residing uneasily inside deterrence is the second layer of the *matroshka*, the broad notion that Washington and Seoul are concerned not to provoke North Korea so much that it opts for a war. We might call this principle "reassurance", and it is this element of North Korean policy that Kim Dae Jung has traditionally (but not exclusively) emphasized. Reassurance is also a largely negative axiom: It furnishes persuasive reasons not to deny the North any food aid at all, not to conduct provocative military exercises near the border, and not to threaten decisive action when the North suggests it might leave the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Inside reassurance rests a third layer of policy, "undermining the regime." Both the cause of peace and the welfare of the North Korean people dictate that we should push the government in Pyongyang toward collapse. This principle is partly negational—it opposes *too much* food aid, *too much* investment—but it also advises action, tough moves that will weaken the regime and prepare the way for its downfall while respecting the axiom of reassurance. It is, of course, difficult to imagine what such moves might be; both deterrence and reassurance can exercise vetoes on bold initiatives—particularly given the immense costs, in terms of money and instability, that the swift collapse of the regime in Pyongyang would entail.

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[2]Agence France-Presse, cited in *Northeast Asia Peace and Security Network Daily Report*, January 12, 1998.

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Undermining the regime wraps around one last shell, one last face to our North Korea policy, that of "spurring change." Its goal is the same as the previous one: to abolish the government in Pyongyang and to unify the peninsula. But spurring change reflects the idea that all parties would like this transition to take place peacefully rather than violently, gradually rather than suddenly, and as cheaply as possible. It also embodies the recognition that achieving these goals demands a greater degree of dialogue and commerce with the North than the other three principles would suggest. A policy of spurring change would pursue its end by prying open North Korean society and exposing it to the benign infection of outside influences—something to which U.S. and South Korean policy rhetorically aspires, but never seriously pursues.

This may now change, at least in Seoul, because encouraging reform on the cheap has become essential for a South Korea that is nearly bankrupt. Seoul faces three immense financial burdens in the coming years: paying off its vast foreign debt; dealing with the huge number of dud loans in its domestic banking sector; and underwriting unification. Toss in the fact that the South is paying for food aid to send north and is on tap to finance the construction of the light-water reactors in the North mandated by the Agreed Framework, and you have an onrushing financial crisis of major proportions. Very suddenly, money means a good deal more in inter-Korean relations than it did just a few months ago, and Seoul has some powerful reasons to cozy up to Pyongyang if a few billion dollars can be saved in the process.

The distinction between undermining the regime and spurring change is, of course, a different take on the same old tune—the recurring debate between proponents of "isolating" and "engaging" the North. Washington and Seoul still face this fundamental decision; they have not yet made it, in part, because of the Rubik's Cube complexity of the interlocking layers of their North Korea policy. Deterrence trumps reassurance, which trumps undermining the regime, which trumps spurring change. We are left with a strange mixture of negation and initiative, isolation and engagement, the hope for a safer future alongside the persistent fear of an all-too-well remembered past.

Thus an irrational striking-out by Pyongyang is worrisome, but not as worrisome as our provoking it into such a move. And while we want to reduce tensions, we fear that easing them will prolong the life of the North Korean regime. We speak about a "soft landing" in the North, but refuse to contemplate providing the economic or social cushions to assure it. We worry about our food aid keeping North Korean soldiers hale and hearty in their DMZ trenches, but cannot bring ourselves to ignore the grainy photographs of waif-thin children. We conclude five years of intense diplomacy with a brilliant and historic bargain on nuclear non-proliferation that promises economic and political contacts with the North, and then we decline to extend them. We haggle over four-party talks on a formal peace treaty to end the Korean War (officially only suspended with an armistice), a treaty that is necessary and proper in the right context—and we ignore the larger task of shaping that context.

SOME ARGUE THAT this is the best we can do, that the present policy—which defenders characterize as "moderate" and "balanced" and good for "buying time"—best manages the demands of these dichotomies. Yet such arguments assume that all the alternatives are mutually exclusive, that the tug-of-war between deterrence and reassurance, between undermining the regime and encouraging it to change cannot end save by one option prevailing and the other collapsing. But the critical fact that should guide a reassessment of U.S. and South Korean policy is that the key contest between isolation and engagement poses an irreconcilable choice only for North Korea. The reason is, plainly put, that placing more emphasis on

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reassurance and encouraging change can no longer make North Korea measurably stronger.

North Korean society has decayed into utter impotence: the vast majority of its industry sits idle, and as much as a third of the population may face death by starvation. The North's official news agency can proclaim, as it recently did, that Kim Jong-il's ascension to head the Korean Worker's Party provoked a "wave of jubilation and emotion" across North Korea—but no one outside Pyongyang views such a claim as anything more than a cruel joke. (Even more darkly Orwellian was the Russian *Itar-Tass* report that Kim's appointment had elicited "merrymaking" and that "dancing people are seen everywhere in Pyongyang.")

Nor will foreign firms rush headlong into the golden economic opportunities promised in the North. With very few exceptions, no such opportunities exist. Several South Korean conglomerates will undoubtedly invest there, but these ventures cannot amount to more than a fraction of a fraction of what would be required to alter the ultimate fate of the North. The argument that "all aid and trade is fungible" is true only to a limited degree. Selling North Korea a thousand new tank engines would enhance its military power in a meaningful way; allowing a hotel chain to build a resort on one of the North's picturesque mountains would not.

Most of all, North Korea will help us minimize exchanges that could be strategically useful to Pyongyang. North Korean officials understand well the stark trade-off, for them, between isolation and engagement. Isolation allows them to preserve their one last trump card, their ability to threaten a split-second attack on the South led by a mortal artillery and missile barrage against Seoul. Isolation is their one remaining immunity from the contamination of foreign ideas. It keeps South Korean investors at arm's length, investors bearing tempting cash but also posing the threat of a growing dependence on hated capitalists from the South. In its pitiful, barbed-wire-enclosed "investment zones", the North has already furnished ample evidence that it understands the need to restrict the scope of foreign investment to the bare minimum. Hence, if Washington and Seoul announced an immediate end to virtually all restrictions on economic exchange with the North, the reaction—save for that of a few boardrooms in Seoul—would be a collective yawn. There is virtually nothing worthwhile for business to do in North Korea, given the narrow scope of what Pyongyang will allow.

Properly calibrated, an expanded program of engagement would be much more likely to destabilize than to perpetuate the North Korean regime. There is, after all, a wealth of historical evidence that dictatorial and hitherto closed political orders cannot long withstand the pressure of contrary ideas infused from the outside.[3] Properly designed, the initiative would pull the rug from under North Korea's ideological nonsense about war-mongering U.S. and South Korean governments, and thereby weaken one of Pyongyang's major tools of popular control. More robust investment and trade would also begin the process of fashioning a social safety net in the North to offset the ultimate cost of unification for the South. Therefore, a U.S.-South Korean strategy of engagement could, if designed wisely, serve both the goals of deterrence and undermining the regime. Kim Dae Jung has arrived in the Blue House at just the right moment to take advantage of this simple truth.

Critics will charge that an engagement policy rides the horns of a dilemma: either the new investment will be too small to achieve these positive goals, or it will be large enough to prolong the survival of Kim Jong-il's regime. In the long run, this is false; the North is a bankrupt society, and no amount of investment will keep it from eventual change or collapse. It is in the short term that the

[3]For evidence on the Soviet and South African cases, see John Chettle, "The American Way", *The National Interest* (Fall 1995).

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complaint becomes more pointed—more food aid and some hard currency earnings might indeed help Kim Jong-il to consolidate his power for a time. But any active U.S. and South Korean approach to the North will involve tradeoffs; the trick is to find the policy that balances them most effectively in terms of our interests. Through its ability to reduce tensions, its tendency to undermine the legitimacy of Kim Jong-il's regime, and its ability to transfer the initiative to Washington and Seoul, an expanded program of engagement meets this test. Best of all, it would provide an avenue for addressing the single most worrisome risk posed by North Korea: the threat of a short-notice invasion of the South.

WE CAN FIND a model for how expanded engagement of the North could achieve this last, indirect goal in the Agreed Framework of 1994. That accord represents a sort of grand bargain in which North Korea agreed to surrender its rapidly emerging nuclear weapons production capability in exchange for two new nuclear reactors and the promise of expanded political and commercial contacts with the United States and other countries. The result was termed a "package deal"—an apt name, for its genius was to gather a number of potentially unrelated issues into a comprehensive whole that addressed basic concerns of both Washington and Pyongyang.

The time has come for an even grander package deal with North Korea. Indeed, it had arrived even before the Asian financial crisis and the South Korean elections, though the combination of Seoul's dire economic situation and Kim Dae Jung's long-standing support for greater engagement of the North makes the case for such an initiative all the more compelling, as well as more doable.

The United States and South Korea could propose the following bargain to the North: Pyongyang would withdraw all of its military forces some defined distance (say, ten or fifteen miles) from the border, thus creating an expanded demilitarized zone, to be monitored by the United Nations. It would take other actions to place its military under wraps, such as allowing UN inspections farther north, gradually reducing the size of its armed forces, and pursuing other confidence-building measures. It would agree to end all missile production programs and sales, continue to respect the Agreed Framework, and renounce terrorism and incursions against the South. All of these steps, such as a wider DMZ and the absence of submarines bumping into South Korean beaches, can be verified fairly easily, reducing the risk that the process would get bogged down in Iraq-style inspection team debacles.

In exchange, the United States and South Korea would remove all restrictions on nonmilitary commerce with the North and take steps to encourage investment. Council on Foreign Relations Senior Fellow Robert Manning, who has argued for a very similar offer, suggests a World Bank or Asian Development Bank program for North Korean reconstruction. We would respond to new appeals for food aid to the North, provide agricultural equipment and fertilizer, and continue that aid as long as necessary—and as long as the North's military withdrawals continue on schedule. To provide a fig leaf of impartiality, we would allow UN inspectors to roam through military bases in the South as well.

Politically, we would accelerate the process of normalizing relations between North Korea and the United States and pledge a regular series of multi-party political dialogues in the region to include the North, commencing with the four-party peace treaty talks. All of those forums would include China, whose counsel and support should be sought before proposing the idea. Manning has also advanced the helpful idea of naming a special coordinator for Korea policy in the U.S. government to shepherd the initiative through the bureaucracy.

Traditionally, the greatest barrier to such a proposal has lain south of the DMZ, not north of it. Many a radical initiative toward North Korea has foundered in Seoul, which, for perfectly understandable reasons, feels the

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contradictions of policy toward the North much more intensely than Washington. Kim Dae Jung can change all of this, if he wishes. His election—and the more energetic South Korean foreign policy it presumably heralds—may turn out to be the most important foundation for a bold new approach to the North, for the simple reason that South Korea must take the lead in any such approach. This is true partly because it is most threatened by the risk of war, and partly because only vigorous arm-twisting by Seoul will convince a skeptical U.S. Congress of the wisdom of engaging the North. The U.S. ability to force events is severely constrained by the North's persistent campaign to drive a wedge between Washington and Seoul; anything smacking of a bilateral U.S.-North Korean axis panics the South.

Skeptics will scoff at these proposals. We will be rewarding a known proliferant for its nuclear (and chemical and biological) skullduggery, they will say. And it is certainly true that the bargain proposed here would not address all of our concerns regarding North Korea. No policy will do that—certainly the current one does not. But, if accepted by the North, it would rapidly and fundamentally reduce the military threat to South Korea and accelerate, not retard, change in the North. The United States and South Korea would have their geopolitical cake and eat it too—because, again, the contest between isolation and engagement is irreconcilable only for Pyongyang.

PRECISELY FOR that reason, other skeptics will ask whether there is any hope of North Korea accepting the offer. No one can say for certain one way or the other. The only sure thing is that the North would not accept it without a great deal of hemming and hawing, without ridiculous counter-proposals followed by bluster and brinkmanship, and without hard bargaining and debate. But Pyongyang might decide ultimately that, its countryside ravaged by famine and its economic prospects hovering between poor and desperate, it has no choice. The widely rumored "new generation" of leaders surrounding Kim Jong-il might seize on the proposal as an opportunity to put into effect long-standing plans for modest, one-notch-less-bold-than-Chinese-style economic reform and international engagement. The younger Kim himself, freshly installed in some of his father's political posts, might find the carrot of international economic and political recognition too tempting to resist.

On the other hand, Pyongyang knows only too well that the intimidation of a sudden hammer blow to the south is its last geopolitical card, to be played in the fated endgame of inter-Korean hostility, and not frittered away for "concessions" that would merely accelerate its extinction. If the military is indeed pulling Kim's strings, as some believe, then it will hardly favor a move that would shift the playing field from its area of advantage to that of the economists and diplomats. Whoever has shaped its behavior of recent years—its veiled references to hidden atom bombs while demanding nuclear talks with Washington; its bellicose language and occasional raids into South Korea while talking trade and aid with Seoul; its fairly public toying with intermediate-range missiles as it demands Korean War reparations from Tokyo—Pyongyang has demonstrated a clear understanding of the leverage it derives from its role as the irrational bad boy of world politics. And even (perhaps especially) if he is truly his own man, Kim Jong-il might be in no mood to forfeit his father's legacy of nationalist war-mongering so soon after officially inheriting his mantle.

But perhaps, just perhaps, the timing for a mid-1998 initiative would be perfect. Kim Dae Jung will no doubt want to leave his mark on relations with the North. Kim Jong-il might be ready to deal, as North Korea's February 19 overture proposing political exchanges with the South may suggest. The United States as well might be frustrated enough with business as usual to try something new. In any case, the success of such an exercise would rest only partly on whether the North agreed to it. Almost as important would be the effect on our own pol-

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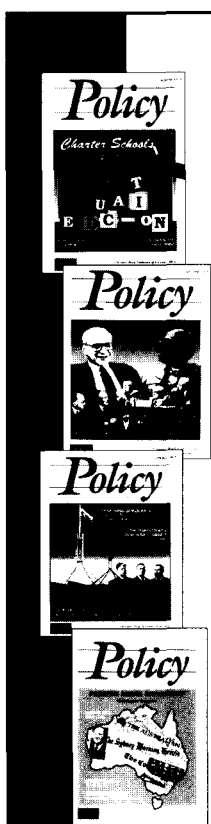
icy. It would finally have a clear direction, a source of energy, and a meaningful content. We would attempt to shape events rather than merely react to them, and would take the first real steps since the early 1990s to reduce in a substantial way the military threat posed by North Korea. No mean consideration, too, is the fact that merely making the offer would almost certainly reduce tensions on the peninsula and open a new channel of dialogue to avoid war. For the first time, Pyongyang would perceive a clear alternative to military action or crisis-mongering as a means of promoting its long-term interests. A new strategy toward North Korea, in other words, might just enable us to recover custody of our policy from fate. At a minimum, it would shape events to encourage fate to work on our behalf. Seneca put it well: "Fortune dreads the brave, and is only terrible to the coward." □



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Conrad's *Nostromo* and the Third World

Robert D. Kaplan

THE PROBLEM with bourgeois societies is a lack of imagination. A person raised in a middle or upper-middle class suburban environment, a place ruled by rationalism in the service of material progress, has difficulty imagining the psychological state of affairs in a society where there is little or no memory of hard work achieving its just reward, and where life inside a gang or a drafty army barracks constitutes an improvement in material and emotional security. Even to encounter first-hand such a society—whose instincts have yet to be refined by several generations of middle class existence—is not enough in the way of an education, since the visitor tends to see it as a laboratory for his or her middle class ideals, and thus immediately begins to find "evidence" for "pragmatic" solutions. For example, the belief among Clinton administration experts that Haiti—which, with the exception of a U.S. Marine occupation from 1915 to 1934, has not known a civil regime since before the French left in 1804—could be made "democratic" by yet another, even less comprehensive occupation demonstrates how our elites *just don't get it*.

The problem is further compounded by the separation of literature from history and of both from political science in this age of academic specialization, creating policymakers ignorant of the very books that explain places like Haiti and Somalia far better than any social science "methodology." While the usefulness of history is accepted and needs no elaboration, the usefulness of literature is less so among the policy elite, even as Marco Diani, a senior researcher at the Centre National de la Récherche Scientifique in Paris, writes that, "The anguish of any society can be found in its literature, often earlier and more clearly revealed than in its social sciences."[1] That is because the future lies inside the silences, inside the very uncomfortably sensitive issues that people are afraid to discuss at dinner parties for fear of what others might think of them. And yet it is a principle function of social science to accumulate information precisely on what people are not afraid to talk about in front of a researcher's tape recorder (which is also why conventional journalism is often the most deceptive form of reporting on a society).

Literature, alas, may be the only salvation for the policy elite, because in the guise of fiction a writer can more easily tell the truth. And in literature's vast canon there is no book of which I am aware that both defines and dissects the problems with the world just beyond our own as well as Joseph

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[1]See Diani's introduction to Honoré de Balzac, *The Bureaucrats* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1993).

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Conrad's *Nostromo: A Tale of the Seaboard*, a 1904 novel about Westerners and indigenous inhabitants of an imaginary South American country, Costaguana.[2] *Nostromo* is neither overly descriptive and moodily vague like Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, nor is its ending entirely unhappy. For a civil society-in-the-making does emerge in Costaguana, but it is midwived by a ruined cynic of a doctor who has given up on humanity, a deeply skeptical journalist, and two bandit gangs, not by the idealist whose actions had helped lead to the country's earlier destruction. Conrad never denies the possibility of progress in any society, but he is ironic enough to know that "The ways of human progress are inscrutable", and that is why "action is consolatory" and "the friend of flattering illusions." Charles Gould, the failed idealist of the novel, who believes absolutely in economic development, "had no ironic eye. He was not amused at the absurdities that prevail in this world."

Nostromo is at once Conrad's best and most difficult work. It is rather long, 465 pages of small paperback print, and to skim it for even a few paragraphs is to risk losing the thread of the narrative. In this media-obsessed age—when "intellectuals" spend their evenings watching C-SPAN and CNN—people may be better acquainted with *Heart of Darkness* than with *Nostromo* only because the former is exceedingly short, as well as amenable to skimming, on account of a thin plot and lengthy landscape descriptions. In *Nostromo*, however, landscape ambiance is a tightly controlled, strategic accompaniment to political realism. The book is Conrad's "statement on what he thought of as the truth about the world", writes Martin Seymour-Smith in his introduction to the Penguin Classics edition.

IT IS A TRIBUTE to Conrad's insight that his description of Costaguana and its port, Sulaco, captures so many of the crucial tidbits and subtleties about troubled Third World states (particularly small and isolated ones) that foreign correspondents of today experience but do not always inform their readers about, because such details do not fit within the confines of "news" or "objective" analysis. There are, for example, the handful of foreign merchants in Sulaco, without whom there would be no local economy; the small, sovereign parcels of foreign territory (company headquarters and embassies) to which people flee at times of unrest; and the obscure army captain who has spent time abroad hanging about cafés in European capitals, and who later finds himself back home, nursing resentments, and at the head of a rebellion provoked by soldiers who drink heavily. There is, too, the "stupendous magnificence" of the local scenery—what Conrad calls a "Paradise of snakes"; the conspiracy theories begot by deep isolation and the general feeling of powerlessness and "futility"; and a wealthier, more developed part of the country that wants to secede because its inhabitants are even more cynical about the political future over "the mountains" than any foreigner. Conrad shows us, too, how bad forms of urbanization deform cultures: "the town children of the Sulaco Campo", for instance, "sullen, thievish, vindictive, and bloodthirsty, whatever great qualities their brothers of the plain might have had." He describes oscillations between chaos and tyranny, and political movements named after their leaders—Monterists and Ribierists—because in Costaguana, despite the talk of "democracy" and "liberation", there are no ideas, only personalities. He describes "the dread of officialdom with its nightmarish parody of administration without law, without security." He describes a port, an ocean port no less, that because of Costaguana's lawlessness is "so isolated" from the world. His conclusion is of a sort

[2]The version of the novel used here is Joseph Conrad, *Nostromo: Tale of the Seabord* (New York and Middlesex, England: Penguin Classics, first published 1904).

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that a novelist can make with less damage to his reputation than a journalist: "The fundamental causes [of the Monterist terror] were the same as ever, rooted in the political immaturity of the people, in the indolence of the upper classes and the mental darkness of the lower." Giorgio Viola, an Italian who fought with Giuseppe Garibaldi and now lives in Costaguana with his dying wife and two daughters, believes, moments after several bullets strike his house and a mob tries to set fire to his roof, that "These were not a people striving for justice, but thieves."

Conrad is relentless in his willingness to confront every unpleasant truth. He will not even admire a beautiful edifice: "The heavy stonework of bridges and churches left by the conquerors", he writes, "proclaimed the disregard of human labour, the tribute-labour of vanished nations." It is in the totality of his realism that the author—a Pole who knew Russian tyranny as a boy and later spent fifteen tough years in the merchant marine—achieves fairness. (In one sentence he demolishes North and South: "There is always something childish in the rapacity of the passionate, clear-minded, Southern races, wanting in the misty idealism of the Northerners, who at the slightest encouragement dream of nothing less than the conquest of the earth.") And it is in his sympathy for individuals, rather than for groups, that Conrad achieves humanity. For *Nostromo*, like any great story, is about individuals and their desperate need for love.

THE FOCUS of the novel is the defunct San Tome silver mine, once run by the late father of Charles Gould, an Englishman. Gould's father had been ruined by corrupt Costaguanan governments that sunk their teeth into his mining profits. Though his father warned him to stay away from Costaguana and the mine, Charles Gould returns to restart its operations, confident that the mine, in addition to making his own fortune, will give Costaguana the wherewithal to modernize. For like so many colonialists and idealists (the two are more closely connected than many think), Gould, Conrad observes,

> cannot act or exist without idealizing every simple feeling, desire, or achievement. He could not believe his own motives if he did not make them first a part of some fairy tale. The earth is not quite good enough for him.

Gould thinks like many members of the international aid community: quantitatively, as though determined to avoid any subjectivity whatsoever—even as subjective thinking would have given him to understand what had ruined his father. Gould sees the problems of restarting the mine as merely technical. But it is only when he surmounts the technical difficulties of extracting the silver for handsome profit that the problems to which his father alluded begin. The very success of the mine, rather than creating money for modernization, destabilizes local politics. That is because the mine, and the cash it produces, become—in the absence of other development—a target of malicious rumors and the magnet for local bandit groups to fight over. The mine represents Gould's ingenuity, not that of the indigenous inhabitants; just as oil and natural gas and mineral concerns in the developing world represent the ingenuity of Western corporations that, and that alone, have the organizational and technical know-how to make it all happen. Thus, the fighting that ensues in Costaguana because of Gould's success with the mine is not unlike the violence that wracked Congo-Brazzaville recently, where oil concessions became a treasure over which murderous factions could fight. In such places, Conrad suggests, anything "merely rational fails."

Dr. Monygham, an expatriate English doctor in Costaguana, understands all of this and is determined to help Gould—not because he likes Gould, but because he admires Gould's wife, Emily, who, he realizes, intuits the reality of the country to which her husband appears deaf and dumb. Dr. Monygham is the dark cynic

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of *Nostromo*, whose very morality is thought to be in question. Dr. Monygham has met "the impossible face to face", through the eyes of dying patients whom he cannot save. He sees through the seductive lie that all situations are clean slates open to broad possibilities. He is wise because he has had experience: the experience of undergoing torture under a previous Costaguanan regime. Torture, Conrad explains, was like a "naturalization" procedure, since it allowed Dr. Monygham to understand life like a true Costaguanan. Indeed, he has become the psychological "slave of a ghost": the ghost of the inquisitorial priest who abused him. (The author alludes to a bright future for torture in the twenty-first century, because as man's passions grow more complex, helped by technological development, his ability to inflict pain on his fellow man will grow infinitely more refined—just look at the twentieth century! Torture may be but an offshoot of progress.) Though Dr. Monygham himself might be beyond redemption, as another character in the story concludes, "He saved us all from the deadly incubus of [the warlord] Sotillo, where a more particular man might have failed."

Another savior of Sulaco—who draws up a blueprint for what would become its successful and humane secession from Costaguana—is Don Martin Decoud, a somewhat radical journalist and among the more intriguing characters in literature. Decoud is a *boulevardier*, a person without accountability, who affects deep concern for humanity and progressive politics in a manner that is at once fashionable and irresponsible. But when he returns from abroad to his homeland, Costaguana, and falls in love with a woman while the country is disintegrating, he is confronted for the first time by a political event that actually matters to his own life. Decoud soon finds himself in a situation whereby he can either help save Sulaco from the warlord Montero, or stand by while the Monterists, once in power, torture him to death. Faced with that, Decoud becomes both devious and heroic, and thus finds his moral salvation through action that, because it is not "merely rational", helps, in an ironic way, to save a whole population from ruin.

Assisting Decoud and Dr. Monygham—I am gravely simplifying a complex plot—are two bandit groups that are no better than the ones that would reduce Sulaco to thuggery. But one of the lessons of *Nostromo* is that in such situations one has to mix with evil in order to deflect it. Among the novel's best moments is when Decoud patiently explains to Mrs. Gould why, in order to save her beloved schools and hospitals, it will be necessary to join forces with the country's most terrifying gang, led by one Hernandez—"the living, breathing example of cruelty, injustice, stupidity, and oppression." Decoud's plan—a savvy one, it turns out—is to make Hernandez a general in the army that will rescue Sulaco.

But the person most crucial to the effort to save Sulaco is the Italian-born leader of the dock workers, Gian' Battista Fidanza, known to the European community as "Nostromo", an Italian corruption for "our man." Nostromo is that "fellow in a thousand" who, as a brave, charismatic, and streetwise leader of men (whose personality bridges that of the Europeans and the natives), is the only one who can actually put Decoud's and Dr. Monygham's plan into action. Without Nostromo, the kind of hands-on chap who knows how to safeguard Gould's silver, how to contact the bandit-allies, and much more, the besieged Europeans, for all of their heated discussions and knowledge, would simply be lost.

Here Conrad shows mastery of a situation that Westerners have faced in the Third World through today, especially when such Westerners have the best interests of the indigenous population at heart. I remember that in Khartoum and in Mogadishu during the Horn of Africa famines of the 1980s, and in West Africa during the various crises of the 1990s, the Western aid community was at the mercy of a handful of local Greeks in

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Khartoum, of local Italians in Mogadishu, and of local Lebanese in West Africa, all of whom *knew how to do things*: how to obtain visas from the police, how to get cargo through the ports, how to ship food past road blocks—details without which the aid efforts would have collapsed. These people were often cynics: they would smuggle contraband as well as famine relief supplies. But they were cynical because they had experience, and because they had experience they were able to be effective toward a good cause. In the person of Nostromo, Conrad has condensed them all.

Conrad's ending, which I will not give away, is often criticized for its weakness, as if Conrad got tired and did not know how to complete such a great novel. Great books, of course, are not necessarily perfect. But it is possible that the critics are wrong. The last fifty-or-so pages of *Nostromo* focus on the personal lives and motivations of Dr. Monygham, Decoud, and Nostromo, and particularly on Nostromo's ill-fated love for Giorgio Viola's youngest daughter, Giselle. The novel, in fact, becomes ordinary as the extraordinary political events fade. But isn't this the way life is? Moreover, by nailing down how the most personal of motives were responsible for the political action of these three characters, Conrad places his pessimism where it belongs: within the rubric of humanism. The author shows that even authentic heroes like Nostromo are motivated by personal vanity rather than by ideals, and that such vanity, rather than something bad, is the true source of incorruptibility. Dr. Monygham and Decoud are brave because each wants to impress a particular woman. Nostromo is brave because he seeks a high reputation that is exchangeable for money. Again, I am crudely simplifying complex literary personalities, but the point is that we often do the most noble things in politics for the most personal of reasons, and not for those we publicly espouse. And that is our salvation: because people who are truly "committed" are often the most dangerous, or at least the most sanctimonious. The desire for wealth, or for the admiration of a beautiful woman, may, in fact, preserve objectivity far better than the desire to save a million people.

But how does one convey such truths to the policy community? Even to discuss them is difficult. And it is especially difficult to teach them in the classroom, because so many students who gravitate to political science and journalism these days tend to come from well-off backgrounds and hold idealistic views—as opposed to other young people I have encountered at universities and in the corporate world, from harsher backgrounds, who are unashamed about just wanting "to make money." It is ironically the latter—those with no interest in political science but who have been conditioned as realists—who may be better equipped psychologically to comprehend the situation in many troubled places in the world. Thus, fine fiction like Conrad's may be the only hope for the next generation of journalists and policymakers. □

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Enough Blame to Go Round

Eliot Cohen

H.R. McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty: Lyndon Johnson, Robert McNamara, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Lies that Led to Vietnam* (New York: Free Press, 1997), 446 pp., $27.50.

FOUR STAR GENERALS do not normally consult the writings of junior field grade officers for advice about career decisions. But it was widely reported that when Air Force Chief of Staff General Ronald Fogleman decided to resign in 1997, he did so at least in part on the basis of a careful reading of H.R. McMaster's *Dereliction of Duty*. Fogleman, deeply dissatisfied with Secretary of Defense William Cohen's decision to deny promotion to Brigadier General Terry Schwalier, commander of the ill-fated American installation bombed by terrorists in Saudi Arabia on June 25, 1996, was weighing a decision to resign over a matter of principle. According to at least some news reports, he finally did so after reading this book.

The connection between the general's decision and McMaster's book might not be immediately obvious. McMaster, after all, writes about the tangled skein of decision making that led the United States into the debacle of Vietnam; Fogleman's decision to quit was triggered by what he viewed as an act of gross unfairness. The tie, however, is real enough. McMaster has written a scathing indictment of America's civilian *and military* leadership during the early phases of the Vietnam war, and he speaks—to a military audience, at any rate—with unique moral authority. His main point is that senior U.S. officers lacked the courage of their convictions, and the country as a whole paid dearly for it. That, presumably, is what moved General Fogleman to the final step in his own path to resignation.

McMaster earned his moral authority under fire. In 1991, as Captain H.R. McMaster, commanding officer, Eagle Troop, 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment, he led a company of American tanks and infantry vehicles in a short, sharp clash with the Iraqi Republican Guards at a battle known only by its location, 73 Easting. A team of researchers from the Institute for Defense Analyses captured the details of that engagement with unusual care, replaying tapes of battle communications, walking the ground, and interviewing participants, and they subsequently rendered it as a computer simulation for training and research purposes. They confirmed what McMaster's subordinates had already known, namely, that he had acted coolly, improvised swiftly, and led bravely. The Iraqis opposite Eagle Troop, 2nd ACR, collapsed in the face of fire and maneuver, dissolving before the advancing Americans who swept through them virtually without loss.

By virtue of his actions and the IDA simulation, McMaster became a hero. In him the Army believed it had found the epitome of its success. Collectively, the Army explained its victory in the Gulf by its cultivation of a cadre of younger officers, professional to the core, trained in the harsh maneuvering grounds of the National Training Center of the Californian desert. Moreover, the McMaster generation of junior officers had grown up in an Army dominated by their counterparts from the Vietnam era—men who were now senior generals and who had come away from

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that conflict determined to permit neither its tactical nor its strategic errors to occur again. Hence, McMaster, who subsequently went on to gain a doctorate in history at the University of North Carolina, speaks with unusual authority as a symbol of the confident young veterans of the Gulf. His call to his leaders to hold themselves to high standards of professional integrity is, therefore, an important one. No wonder, then, that General Fogleman, himself an acute student of history, would pay close attention to a work that on nearly every page excoriates his predecessors for their unwillingness to speak and act as their positions required.

GIVEN HIS BACKGROUND, it is not surprising that, with his training and his special generational burden, McMaster speaks as much to current concepts of professionalism and military duty as to the historical events that his study addresses. To be sure, *Dereliction of Duty* has no small significance as a study of the way in which the United States entered the Vietnam War. It is a professionally researched account of high-level decision making from late 1961 through July 1965, by which point over one hundred thousand U.S. troops were in Vietnam or on their way there. The narrative focuses on a very narrow circle of senior civilians and generals, chiefly, the President, Lyndon B. Johnson, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Carefully researched and clearly written, the book offers a blow by blow account of what men said and wrote as they began a fateful commitment to a large scale land war in Southeast Asia.

McMaster spares no one in his judgments. He uses the words "lie" and "liar" with a cool disdain that barely conceals an indignation simmering beneath the apparatus of historical scholarship. The President was duplicitous and high-handed; his secretary of defense unspeakably arrogant and dictatorial; the generals craven, parochial, and cowardly. On the evidence presented, one is hard put to disagree.

Yet the thesis, however well articulated and carefully documented, merits a critical look, and not only for purely historical reasons. Vietnam has become the defense establishment's morality play, a cautionary tale of civilian meddling, military timidity, and ensuing—but unnecessary—disaster. From it both statesmen and generals have derived lessons about how to direct and fight wars, lessons accepted virtually without question by the younger generation of politicians and soldiers for whom Vietnam represents nothing more than a vague memory of childhood television. In a sophisticated but not necessarily benign way, McMaster's work contributes to that morality tale. His premises and conclusions deserve careful examination in at least three areas: in its American self-absorption; in its preoccupation with a narrow range of actors; and in its reluctance to explore alternatives to the choices faced by the United States early in the Vietnam War.

Dereliction of Duty, like almost all of the Vietnam literature, tells its story from only one vantage point: that of the United States. American archives provide all of the raw material, and American perspectives crowd out all others. The Vietnamese figure only as mysterious external forces, whose unexplained eruptions or machinations provide the cues for American actors to deliver their lines. To some large extent, this overwhelming reliance on the American side of the story reflects scholarly impediments of a familiar kind—the imperative of learning a difficult Asian language, the closure (or nonexistence) of important enemy archives, and the unreliability of interview information. But those obstacles, however genuine, are not insuperable: between captured documents and the new openness of Vietnam to American researchers, one could, if one wished, tell something of the story from the other side of the hill.

The truth is, however, that most students of the war are simply not interested in the other side's strategy, tactics, organization, and resources, and such strategic solipsism is a dangerous thing. It limits, from a scholarly

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point of view, even so meticulous a piece of work as this one. But the effects of such self-absorption—a characteristic American failing, alas—are far more dangerous when carried into the world of policy. Ironically, one of McMaster's points about the civilian leadership of the Pentagon is that it knew little about Vietnam and saw no need to learn much about it, relying instead on strategic theories of signaling and limited escalation. It is hard to see why this justified criticism does not also apply to McMaster's own work. His account of the war is limited to Washington, yet, without looking further afield, he concludes:

> The war in Vietnam was not lost in the field, nor was it lost on the front pages of the *New York Times* or on the college campuses. It was lost in Washington, DC, even before Americans assumed sole responsibility for the fighting in 1965 and before they realized the country was at war; indeed, even before the first American units were deployed.

To advance such a proposition without looking closely at what was happening in Vietnam itself during this time is, at the least, a curious thing for a combat veteran to do.

No less curious is his declaration that the decisions of 1962-65 predetermined all that would occur in the ensuing six years—again, without reference to how the U.S. military would organize itself for war and wage it. Yet this view is orthodoxy in military circles; namely, that the critical failures in Vietnam were, first, an absence of a clear strategy, second, an incremental commitment of force (particularly in the bombing of North Vietnam), and third, that both mistakes—made by civilian leaders—took place at the outset of the war. At the very least, the notion that no important decisions or choices were made in the period 1965-1970 requires argumentation, and not mere assertion.

There are two alternative views to those advanced by McMaster. One is that no strategy could have achieved the American objective of establishing a free and durable South Vietnam; the second is that the military itself should share some of the blame for the catastrophe. The former requires a careful exploration of the enemy's resources, will, and ability; the latter a more careful scrutiny of what went on in the field.

It was the military and not the civilian leadership that adopted, for the first part of the war, an operational approach of "search and destroy" that devastated the countryside of South Vietnam while doing little to bolster the Vietnamese army. In so doing the Army largely followed the line of thought of American advisers to the French in the preceding Indochina war—advisers who had consistently recommended conventional responses to a guerrilla war, and who had disdained hard-won French lessons to the contrary.[1] Similarly, it was the military that rejected the idea of creating a unified command over American and South Vietnamese forces (a measure that had proven invaluable in Korea), that created ruinous rotation policies that kept many officers in positions of command for only six months at a time, and that accepted a war effort splintered among a half dozen competing commands in Vietnam, Honolulu, and the United States.

McMaster's account, however, focuses not on these shortcomings but on civilian dictation to the military over how to fight the war. His unsparing criticism of the military centers on its unwillingness to express openly and unreservedly to the President and Congress its opposition to the strategy of gradual pressure favored by McNamara. Critical of the brass' willingness to swallow their professional judgments in order to curry favor with the harsh and overbearing secretary, and contemptuous of the petty service rivalries that, for example, kept a highly qualified Air Force officer,

[1]For the argument that an alternative, counterinsurgency-based strategy existed, see William Colby, *Lost Victory* (Chicago: Contemporary Books, 1989); and Andrew F. Krepinevich, *The Army and Vietnam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986).

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General Jacob Smart, from becoming the commanding officer in the Pacific (traditionally a Navy stronghold), McMaster implies that unconstrained military judgment would have served the country much better.

Perhaps—if one assumes that the military had a better idea of how to fight the war. Unfortunately, there is no evidence that it did. Indeed, McMaster's own account makes it abundantly clear that some of the country's senior generals displayed bizarre strategic judgment. General Curtis LeMay, chief of staff of the U.S. Air Force was, throughout, an extreme and relentless advocate of bombing as a cure-all for the flagging war effort and, as well, a rabid opponent of the Army's introduction of helicopters into the ground war. "You fly one of these damned Huey's [the Army's transport helicopter] and I'll fly an F-105 and we'll see who survives. I'll shoot you down and scatter your peashooter all over the goddam ground", he shouted at the Army chief of staff, Harold K. Johnson. But beyond this, one sees in McMaster's account (as elsewhere in the Vietnam literature) no evidence that the military had any consistent strategic alternative beyond more force and fewer constraints on its employment.

In such a vacuum of strategic thinking, the military's chief complaint against the civilian leadership is that it restrained the use of force. But this claim has only limited substance in the case of the war in South Vietnam proper, where troops soon began to pour in far faster than the inadequate ports and roads of that country could accommodate them. Within broad limits (in particular, that of a reserve mobilization, which President Johnson would not allow), the military had a free hand to use over half a million men and unfettered fire power to defeat the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army in South Vietnam.

More significant restrictions were placed on bombing in North Vietnam, where the President and the secretary of defense handpicked targets from lists developed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, thereby engaging in such absurdities as denying pilots the right to strike surface-to-air missile batteries within no-strike zones around Hanoi and Haiphong. In fact, however, as Air Force officer Mark Clodfelter has argued, the civilian leadership actually yielded over time to JCS requests to hit the targets on its lists.[2] The difficulty was simply that given civilian and military reluctance to burn the cities of the North to the ground and to devastate its agricultural system, air power could not hope to break the will of North Vietnam. Moreover, the civilian leadership was haunted by the specter of Korea, a war as close to them in time as Ronald Reagan's second term in the White House is to us today. Fearful that bombing targets close to the Chinese frontier, in Hanoi, or the port city of Haiphong would provoke an expansion of the war inducing open Chinese or even Soviet participation in it, McNamara and Johnson approved increased air operations gingerly. Such broader international calculations bulked larger in the minds of American leaders than one might think today. McMaster reports these fears, but does not give them much weight.

McMaster's specific critique of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is two-pronged. First, he holds them responsible for a paralyzing inter-service rivalry that had some of the consequences noted above. His second criticism is more troubling: excessive loyalty. The recurrent theme in McMaster's book is that the generals and admirals should have done something—resign, protest vociferously, or declare to Congress their opposition to the strategy of the war. To these main criticisms, and other lesser ones ably described in the book, one might add the absurdity of allowing the war to be controlled by a headquarters located in Honolulu, thousands of miles from the war zone, and preoccupied with the vastness of the Pacific region from the Aleutians to Australia.

One wishes that McMaster's epilogue

[2]Mark Clodfelter, *The Limits of Airpower: The American Bombing of North Vietnam* (New York: Free Press, 1989).

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had treated the issue of excessive loyalty at greater length. Although the criticism is strongly implied throughout three hundred pages of preceding text, the epilogue is McMaster's opportunity to come four square with it. But he doesn't. What should the Vietnam-era brass have done, and when, precisely, should they have done it? Was Army Chief of Staff Johnson really so wrong to think that his resignation would have made a difference for two days and then been forgotten? What would be the consequences of a system in which general officers were to resign offhandedly over strategic disputes? After all, both General George C. Marshall and Admiral Ernest J. King had thought President Roosevelt's insistence on the North Africa landings in 1942 a ruinous mistake—should they have quit? We are not told. Nor have those who insist on resignation as the proper remedy for insufficient attention to military opinion ever squared the right of senior officers to quit in honor over strategic disagreements with the denial of similar rights to conscripts or junior officers who, after all, pay the price in blood for their leaders' ineptitude or division.

McMaster is on surer ground if he believes that the generals had an obligation not to resign but to state their views stubbornly and firmly to the secretary and the President, orally and in writing. This, it is clear, they were hesitant to do—not for the first time were men of undisputed physical courage considerably less brave in the civic sphere. But McMaster's views are not entirely clear on what ought to be one of the book's key points.

More dismaying yet is McMaster's harsh (though convincing) account of the tenure of General Maxwell Taylor as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from 1962-64. President Kennedy saw in this brainy and youthful paratrooper, who wrote books as well as read them, the model general of the New Frontier. McMaster, correctly, sees in him a far more sinister figure—manipulative and too chummy with his political masters to serve them well. Yet to some extent, Maxwell Taylor was merely the forerunner of the modern chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who, cloaked with the responsibility to serve as the chief military adviser to the president and the secretary of defense, is effectively commanding general of the armed forces. Taylor represented, moreover, a type of officer all too comfortable with the ways of Washington, with predecessors and successors aplenty; it is fair to suspect that he was not the last chairman of the Joint Chiefs to view himself as a member of a president's political team rather than as a soldier pure and simple.

McMaster concludes with two interesting sentences:

> When the Chiefs requested permission to apply force consistent with their conception of U.S. objectives, the president and McNamara, based on their goals and domestic political constraints, rejected JCS requests or granted them only in part. The result was that the JCS and McNamara became fixated on the means rather than on the ends, and on the manner in which the war was conducted instead of a military strategy that could connect military actions to achievable policy goals.

There is, however, nothing problematic about the situation described in that first sentence. Civilian authority had every right, indeed, a clear responsibility, to insist on *its* conception of American objectives, and *its* understanding of political constraints, foreign as well as domestic. It was not disagreement—typical of decision-making in most wars, after all—that led to disaster; rather, it was the failure of the civilian leadership to engage its military advisers in a hard and continuous debate about ends and means, and the inability of those advisers to participate effectively in such a debate. In that missing exchange, which might have led to greater civil-military disagreement, not less, lay whatever hopes the United States might have had for victory.

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IN THE "authorized" but, in truth, mythic version of history after 1991, the triumph of the Gulf War is the polar opposite of Vietnam. In the Gulf (supposedly) the civilians set clear goals and then got out of the way, abjuring the kind of meddling that led to catastrophe in Vietnam. In 1991, a unified military, setting aside their service prejudices, went confidently to war under the sure guidance of a powerful chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, strengthened by the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986. Without friction or conflict (supposedly), civilians and soldiers marched off in harmony.

The reality is more subtle. The Gulf War was exceptional in almost every strategic respect imaginable, most notably in the freedom of action international politics allowed the United States in 1991. There were no hard tradeoffs to be made between needs in one corner of the globe and another; the enemy had no patrons, indeed, almost no friends at all; he had put himself utterly in the wrong with the American public and most of world opinion; and he had exposed himself in the most foolish way imaginable to the vastly superior technology of the United States. In such a war statesmen and generals need not quarrel overmuch, although quarrel they did.

But such good luck is not the norm. Even when soldiers and statesmen are of the highest quality, they still have such different backgrounds and imperatives before them that they must, almost of necessity, disagree in the course of a difficult war. A government at war needs not a president willing to hand over the conduct of war to his military advisers, nor generals willing to pluck the stars from their shoulders in protest at civilian "meddling", but politicians and officers who can engage in a serious dialogue about ends and means. That dialogue—which characterized Lincoln's leadership in the Civil War, and Churchill's in World War II—will always be extended and difficult. It must be an unequal dialogue, as well, since the political leadership must never concede its right to mold strategic choices in accordance with the needs of policy. In such a dialogue, it is the military officer's duty to state his views candidly and bluntly, running the risk of dismissal, which is an honorable price to pay for honesty.

Recently, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Henry Shelton, invited Major McMaster to lecture the most senior generals in the American military about his book. These men are nearly the last of the Vietnam generation still on active duty; their sense of Vietnam's lessons are probably too deeply ingrained to change very much. But in fifteen years or so the McMasters of today will have become generals. One hopes that the lesson they will have learned from Vietnam is not so much the imperative of resignation and protest, but rather the skill to engage their civilian superiors. One also wishes them the wisdom to understand strategic problems that may seem no less baffling to them than did those of Southeast Asia to their predecessors a generation ago. □

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A Hedgehog After All

Adam Wolfson

John Gray, *Isaiah Berlin* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 183 pp., $35.

THE BEST KNOWN anecdote about Isaiah Berlin refers to the occasion during World War II when his work at the British embassy in Washington caught the attention of Winston Churchill. The Prime Minister expressed a wish to meet Berlin, and this was arranged. At the lunch that followed, Churchill asked: "Berlin, what do you think is your most important piece you've done for us lately?" The surprising response: "White Christmas." The invitation had been sent in error to the wrong I. Berlin.

Funny as it is—especially as one contemplates Churchill's bewilderment at the answer—and familiar as it has become, the story is also especially apt today. In recalling and celebrating Berlin, it is important to make sure that we have the right man.

When Berlin died last November, there was a cascade of adulatory essays and obituaries, all of them well deserved. Yet there is a sense in which, once again, the wrong Berlin was being celebrated; or if not exactly the wrong Berlin then only a half of him showed up in the many commemorative essays about his life. His contributions to the history of political thought were extolled, especially his brilliant "Two Concepts of Liberty" and his memorable essay on Tolstoy, "The Hedgehog and the Fox." His studies of romanticism were appreciated, and the renewed interest he sparked in such neglected thinkers as Vico and Herder was applauded. Some focused on his support of Zionism. Others commented on his early work in analytical philosophy, while a few recalled his lively personal essays on FDR, Einstein, Churchill, and Akhmatova. But very few of his admirers, or detractors for that matter, bothered to mention what was undeniably important about the man: his unique grasp of the horrors of communism and his unwavering conviction that Western intellectuals must oppose communism or, at the very least, not confuse it with liberalism.

Berlin's critique of communism was nearly unmatched in the West. He saw, before most did, that communism was as liable to undertake sadistic genocidal campaigns as any fascist regime—a proposition that many liberals even today refuse to accept. In his 1959 essay "European Unity and its Vicissitudes", he captured the genocidal logic inherent in Marxism by speaking hauntingly in its own voice:

> It is idle for the progressives to try to save their reactionary brothers from defeat: the doomed men cannot hear them, and their destruction is certain. All men will not be saved: the proletariat, justly intent upon its own salvation, had best ignore the fate of their oppressors; even if they wish to return good for evil, they cannot save their enemies from 'liquidation.' They are 'expendable'—their destruction can be neither averted nor regretted by a rational being, for it is the price that mankind must pay for the progress of reason itself: the road to the gates of Paradise is necessarily strewn with corpses.

Some of his admirers last fall, most notably Charles Krauthammer in the *Washington Post* and Michael Ignatieff in the *New York Review of Books*, did not overlook Berlin's anti-communism. But a few such as Stuart Hampshire did, while Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Leon Wieseltier, and Marilyn Berger for the *New York Times* settled for general allusions to his opposition to "monism" or "totalitarianism" or "holism", at least for the most part. A critical Paul Johnson went so far as to dismiss Berlin's opposition to communism, claiming that Berlin "had little to say about the rights and wrongs of the cold war."

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What nearly everyone wrote about instead was his development of the idea of "pluralism", so much so that in their discussions of Berlin this seemed to overshadow nearly everything else about him. The *New York Times* epitomized the trend with its first-page headline: "Isaiah Berlin, Philosopher And Pluralist, Is Dead at 88." Now there can be no doubt that his opposition to communism was of one cloth with his philosophy of pluralism, and thus to discuss the latter is to imply the former. Yet it remains a puzzle: Why so little mention of what he actually had to say about communism and so much discussion of his philosophy of pluralism?

A GOOD place to begin, and a masterly study of Berlin's political thought as well, is John Gray's book, which appeared shortly before Berlin's death. A philosopher and a close friend of Berlin's, Gray brilliantly expounds in highly condensed prose Berlin's theory of pluralism, developing its direction and course, even where Berlin is silent, and explaining its political relevance.

Berlin is famous for dividing thinkers into hedgehogs, who know one big thing, and foxes, who know many smaller things. It has always been assumed that Berlin was a fox, in part because of his obvious opposition to anything smacking of "system" or "single central visions", as he once put it, but also simply because of the astounding range of his interests. However, Gray makes a convincing case for viewing Berlin as a hedgehog, because "all of Berlin's work is animated by a single idea of enormous subversive force." That idea is, he says, "value-pluralism", the idea that the values to which peoples, as well as individuals, devote themselves are real, diverse, and in conflict. More than that: within a single culture or the soul of a single person, values can be, and frequently are, at war with each other. Yet there is no standard—or as Gray puts it, "no Archimedean point"—for judging which values should prevail or which are superior. To choose one ideal, say that of the devout Christian, is to say good-bye to another, say that of the Roman soldier.

According to Gray, this understanding of the way the world is gives rise to a political doctrine he calls "agnostic liberalism", a form of liberalism that has jettisoned all claims to universalism. No more are the classical liberal rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness to be thought of as grounded in natural right, natural law, or human nature. Instead, liberalism under Berlin's pluralist dispensation is to be considered one possible way of life among many other ones, developed by certain peoples to suit their particular time and place. As Gray arrestingly puts it, Berlin's theory of value-pluralism "goes all the way down, right down into principles of justice and rights." And it thus follows "inexorably" that "a liberal form of life is a contingent matter, not a privileged expression of universal human nature." To the extent that liberalism remains desirable, it does so precisely because of its capacity to accommodate diverse life styles. That is, it is compatible with the truth of value-pluralism.

Gray repeatedly emphasizes the "subversive" quality of Berlin's theory of pluralism, a theory that often seems to come perilously close to relativism. Indeed, almost every writer who takes up Berlin's thought at least pauses to consider whether his theory of pluralism shares something with relativism. Gray himself does so, and then argues that it does not. But whether or not it is relativistic, Berlin's theory of value-pluralism might still undermine liberalism. (Gray confronts this question as well, arguing that though it could, it generally does not.) What is clear about Berlin's theory is this: It allows for much greater diversity and a much wider tolerance of other (non-liberal) ways of life than anything countenanced by Locke, Kant, or John Stuart Mill. All of these older liberalisms have, as Gray points out, a notion of "rational choice" at their core. But since for Berlin there can be no "Archimedean point", such as rationalism, from which to distinguish right choice from wrong choice, rational choice is replaced in Berlin's philosophy with "radical choice"—"choice without criteria, grounds, or principles." "That is the heart of Berlin's liberalism", argues Gray.

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And that, I believe, perfectly sums up why Berlin has been remembered almost exclusively as the high priest of pluralism, rather than for, say, his anti-communism. No theory imaginable could be more supportive of the right to choose, which has become, argues William Kristol, the "hollow core" of contemporary liberalism. Berlin's theory of value-pluralism, it seems, perfectly complements, or lends support to, current intellectual fashions—our postmodern way of thinking, our aversion to being judgmental, our increasingly multiculturalist cast of mind. Gray at various points even translates Berlin's theories into "the jargon of postmodernism" and quotes Richard Rorty, the dean of American postmodernism, to explain the general drift of Berlin's thought.

BUT IF full honor is to be paid to Berlin we should remember the whole of his politics, not just its philosophic core denuded of circumstance and setting. This means recalling the historical context in which he lived and wrote and the political uses to which he put his theory of pluralism. For as Berlin himself once warned, "Political words and notions and acts are not intelligible save in the context of the issues that divide the men who use them."

The context, as he himself describes it in his "Two Concepts of Liberty", first published in 1958, "is the open war that is being fought between two systems of ideas which return different and conflicting answers to what has long been the central question of politics—the question of obedience and coercion." One system, called by Berlin "negative liberty", held that liberty was the freedom to do as one wishes with a minimum of interference from the state. The rival system, called by Berlin "positive liberty", held that liberty was not freedom *from* but freedom *to*. Such freedom was the equivalent of "self-realization", not of the empirical self with its actual wishes and desires, but of some theoretical "true self." Under such a regime of "liberty", if one can really call it that, individuals would, in Rousseau's phrase, be forced to be free, "free", that is, to take part in political causes, in the class struggle, or in the destiny of the race, tribe, or nation. While Berlin did not deny the value of positive liberty, he made clear that it could lead to political tyranny and the obliteration of the actual person with his actual preferences.

The distinction drawn between negative and positive liberty was no mere academic exercise in logic chopping for Berlin; it reflected "the great clash of ideologies that dominates our world." The world of which he spoke was riven by the Cold War, in which a liberal West confronted Soviet and Chinese communism and various Marxist struggles for national liberation in the Third World. The liberal West represented the cause of negative liberty; communism the claims of positive liberty. And it was also a world, Berlin pointed out, in which many "contemporary liberals" were blind to the fundamental differences between the "two systems."

Tony Judt recently recalled the extent of that blindness. "I well remember", he wrote in the *New York Times*, "sitting in the graduate lounge of Cambridge University in 1969 while a tenured member of the economics faculty assured us that the Chinese Cultural Revolution, then at its paroxysmic height, was the last best hope for humankind." According to the best estimates, as many as a million Chinese perished in that last best hope, but many Western liberals chose to shut their eyes or close their minds to these horrific events. After all, communism was on the march, to recall a phrase, and a great many liberals were convinced that justice and history were on its side. Into that world turned upside down Berlin unleashed his theory of value-pluralism, publishing his book *Four Essays on Liberty* (which included the essay "Two Concepts of Liberty") in 1969. It would prove to be, as I am sure he intended, an immensely appealing defense of liberalism, especially to Western elites, for he emphasized the great freedoms liberalism allowed and the generous toleration for diversity that it recommended; never did his defense of liberalism become a brief for capitalism, as did Hayek's or Milton

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Friedman's. No doubt it saved many a young intellectual from falling under the sway of Judt's Cambridge University professor and many others like him. Value-pluralism proved to be a powerful curative against the spreading sense among Western intellectuals that liberal values were inferior to Marxist ones.

But how much should we emphasize Berlin's value-pluralism today, now that communism is a thing of the past and totalitarian systems are everywhere in rubble? In his 1949 essay, "Political Ideas in the Twentieth Century", Berlin argued that "every situation calls for its own specific policy, since out of the crooked timber of humanity, as Kant once remarked, no straight thing was ever made." He went on to argue that what his age called for was not more faith or stronger leadership—there was already plenty of that to go around—but "less Messianic ardour, more enlightened scepticism, more toleration of idiosyncrasies." Enlightened skepticism and toleration are good things, to be sure. But is our "situation" the same as Berlin's? Does it call for the same "policy", the same "subversive" value-pluralism, as Gray describes it, that Berlin's did? Gray takes note of this question and answers in the affirmative: "Agnostic pluralism is hardly likely to be less appropriate to our needs at a time when the historical theodicies of the political religions, such as Marxism, have been supplanted by resurgent fundamentalisms as threats both to individual liberty and minimal human decency."

A danger of fundamentalism there always will be, but, for my part, I am not sure what are those "resurgent fundamentalisms" with which agnostic liberalism must do battle. Perhaps radical Islam. But unlike Marxism, Islamic fundamentalism holds no appeal for Western intellectuals, and so it is hard to imagine a need for an agnostic liberalism to woo Western liberals away from its enticements. (The threat that Islamic fundamentalism poses to individual liberty and human decency is strictly a foreign policy matter and is best countered by, for example, a strong naval presence in the Persian Gulf.) If Gray has in mind the threat of Christian fundamentalism in America, it is again hard to imagine Western liberals finding anything attractive in it. And if Christian fundamentalism poses a threat to individual liberties, a debatable point, it hardly does so on the same scale as communism. If the West suffers from anything today it is not fundamentalism or Messianic idealism or monistic ideologies but a care-free relativism and a general loss of purpose. What is needed is not an agnostic liberalism that only confirms popular prejudices, but a reinvigorated liberalism that will appeal to the growing herd of agnostics.

Joseph Brodsky once wrote in a tribute to Berlin that opponents of pluralism charge that such a theory "is pregnant with moral relativism." Brodsky did not defend Berlin's theory from the charge (as does Gray). He responded simply: "It is. But then moral absolutism is not so hot either." It seems to me that that is the heart of the matter: to develop a practical politics that avoids both the folly of fundamentalism and the abyss of relativism. With moral absolutism in retreat throughout the liberal West, it is appropriate to wonder whether Berlin's value-pluralism still has much to recommend it to us. We might also wonder whether Berlin himself, a man who was exceptionally attuned to the false idols of his own times, would not have asked the same question had he come of age in our postmodern times.

Brodsky held that Berlin's *Four Essays on Liberty* "was more the product of a gut reaction against an atrocious century than a philosophical tract." As for the man who wrote it, he was "neither a philosopher nor a historian of ideas, not literary critic or social utopian, but an autonomous mind in the grip of an outward gravity." Perhaps that's the Berlin we should remember: not the philosopher of value-pluralism, a theory that is now so congenial to us anyway, but the gentleman who rose to liberalism's defense in a dangerous time, and caused others to do the same. □

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Our Man in Nairobi

Michael Chege

Smith Hempstone, *Rogue Ambassador: An African Memoir* (Sewanee, TN: University of the South Press, 1997), 352 pp., $29.95.

FOR YEARS, KENYA'S image in the West was that of spectacular natural beauty, game parks overfilled with wildlife, and safaris out of its handsome capital city, Nairobi. Close to a million tourists from Europe and the United States journeyed there each year, and Hollywood glamorized it in fact and fiction. Between 1963, when it became independent of Britain, and 1978, when the current president, Daniel arap Moi, took over, the economy grew at a regional record rate of 8 percent. The government had a reputation of sound fiscal management, a pro-Western foreign policy, and a marked political openness—though the latter had begun to buckle under intolerance and corruption by August 1978 when the founding president, Jomo Kenyatta, died.

All that had changed by the time President Bush named Smith Hempstone, a Kenya aficionado and former editor-in-chief of the *Washington Times*, to be the fifth U.S. ambassador to Kenya in 1989. As a result of rampant corruption, misguided investment policies, and administrative incompetence, average Kenyans were then poorer than they had been at independence in 1963. One-party rule had been decreed in 1982. The rule of law had become a thing of the past, as bona fide dissenters were hauled into jail, tortured, or bludgeoned to death. Moi, the man presiding over the desecration of Kenya, with profit to himself and his ethnic-derived coterie of fawning devotees, is an ex-school teacher and former vice president. He is also Mzee (elderly sage) to the political faithful, head of the ruling KANU party, the giver of cash bounty, allocator of state lands and top public offices, commander-in-chief of the armed forces, and—he bragged to Hempstone—"the first African to fight communism." Among his more modest demands of his people is: "Kenyans must learn to sing after me like parrots."

Thanks to a naive and ethnically fragmented opposition, and a decidedly unlevel playing field, Moi was re-elected president by a minority (36 percent) of the vote in a 1992 election, a vote that he had resisted with marked tenacity and violence until 1991. The same scenario was repeated in January 1998. It is now touch and go whether the country will survive the institutionalization of criminality, economic decay, and the demographic explosion that it has suffered in the last two decades, or will implode like its neighbor, Somalia.

Since the end of the Cold War, the concept of the rogue state has acquired currency: a state that specializes in a style of domestic tyranny and economic plunder, while sponsoring international terrorism as an instrument of state power. Kim Jung-il's North Korea, Saddam Hussein's Iraq, and Hassan Tourabi's Sudan top the bill. But they have plenty of potential company—domestic tyrants who only lack international exposure because plotting global terrorism and waging war is not (yet) part of their specialty. Along with the late Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire, General Sani Abacha of Nigeria, and Paul Biya of Cameroon, Daniel arap Moi of Kenya is a case in point. No one should be terribly surprised by the international company the Moi government has kept: it gave refuge and protection to some of the perpetrators of the

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1994 genocide in Rwanda, it supported the vile regimes of Mobutu Sese Seko in Zaire and Mohammed Siad Barre in Somalia, and it has hounded its opponents in exile.

The idea of a self-described "rogue" U.S. ambassador taking on a rogue regime in the name of democracy might seem to be the stuff of fiction. Smith Hempstone's absorbing narrative of his diplomatic "arm wrestling" with a recalcitrant Moi regime between 1989 and 1993 is perhaps ultimate proof that fact can be stranger than fiction. Lucid and witty, it provides the most comprehensive account yet of the behind-the-scenes scheming and raw greed that has characterized the pillaging of Kenya, as well as of the aborted efforts by the deeply split democratic opposition to replace the Moi dictatorship with an accountable and reasonably efficient government.

Hempstone landed in Kenya in 1989 as the global communist threat was receding and the Bush administration was promoting democracy abroad as a pillar of U.S. foreign policy. At the same time, after eleven years of Moi the Kenyan middle class had become largely disenchanted with playing the parrot. With his impeccable Republican and conservative credentials, Hempstone's appointment was suspect to ranking congressional Democrats. Aware of Kenya's nascent but repressed pro-democracy movement, they suspected that Hempstone might succumb to Moi's anti-communist rhetoric and ignore his appalling human rights record. But getting confirmed proved the easy part. Hempstone knows Kenya extremely well, having gone there first in 1957 on the advice of his hero, Ernest Hemingway, and then lived there as a reporter in the 1960s. His own initial assessment was, indeed, that Moi was a good man "surrounded by evil counselors." He soon learned otherwise.

His education began with the murder of Kenya's foreign minister, Robert J. Ouko, in February 1990. This followed shortly after a lackluster private visit to Washington by Moi and his entourage the previous month. Official Washington all but ignored the Kenyans except in one minor respect: Ouko earned a brief personal appointment for himself—but not for Moi—with President Bush (they had been colleagues as ambassadors at the UN in the 1970s). That sealed his fate. Kenya's president was furious at this open violation of the parrot rule. Those around him began to murmur that the United States was grooming Ouko to take over. A few weeks later, his charred remains, with two bullet holes in the head, were found in the bush near his sugarcane farm in western Kenya. The government pronounced it a suicide, but according to Hempstone, the poor man was probably tortured and partially dismembered in the regime's tiger cages before being finally shot at the presidential palace, in full view of the top Kenyan establishment. A Scotland Yard detective, brought in after a national uproar, pointed the finger at two suspects: Moi's *éminence grise* and then energy minister, Nicholas K. Biwott, and the regime's security chief, Hezekiah B. Oyugi. But to this day no one has been convicted of that murder, or, indeed, of any of the other ghastly crimes committed as the regime fought to contain the demands for democracy: ethnic cleansing in the Rift Valley Province, firebombing of the free press, arrest and torture of dissidents, death threats to the outspoken clergy, bribery, and corruption. By the end of his first year in Nairobi, Hempstone had no doubt as to who was responsible for all this: "One man set the tone of Kenya's government and that man was Moi."

For daring to take a stand against Moi, Hempstone—with his Hemingway looks—became a Kenyan folk hero, celebrated in song and poetry. More than any U.S. ambassador in Africa, Hempstone spoke forcefully against dictatorship and in favor of civil liberties. Soon he was on the receiving end of Moi's wrath. In what must surely go down as one of the most bizarre episodes in modern diplomatic history, the U.S. embassy in Nairobi got word of a plot to poison Hempstone while he worked the diplomatic cocktail circuit. Hempstone survived by pouring his own drinks and selecting canapés from the back of the tray for the rest of his tenure.

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In between bouts with the Moi regime, Hempstone and his wife Kitty found time for old passions: good works for the poor in the remotest parts of the land, travel, and camping in the parks. The safari narratives provide moving accounts, worth reading in their own right, of the decimation of wildlife (by poachers and the political class), and the plight of Sudanese and Somali refugees streaming across the Kenyan border.

The book contains vital lessons for American diplomacy in Africa. One of these has to do with the cynicism and counterscheming against the United States by the European ex-colonial powers, notably France and Britain. Hempstone castigates Whitehall's thinly veiled support for Moi and his cronies, whom British diplomats perceived as pillars of stability and protectors of British investments in Kenya. The British embassy in Nairobi exuded indifference to repression and contempt for the Kenyan opposition—as well as resentment toward Hempstone personally. For its part, the French embassy in Kenya was too preoccupied entering into business contracts with the Moi regime to have any time for African liberty, fraternity, or equality. Among the leading Western diplomats in Nairobi at the time, the only ones to give succor to the besieged yet widely popular American was the German ambassador, Bernd Mutzelburg, and, to a lesser extent, the Danish and Swedish envoys. If we had understood at the time that a strong, collective Western diplomatic démarche against Moi was impossible, we would have been better prepared later not to count on securing one against Nigeria—or today against Iraq.

Although Hempstone is generally appreciative of the U.S. embassy staff that served under him through his turbulent days in Nairobi, he can barely disguise his impatience with the timidity and officiousness of the mandarins at Foggy Bottom. In the intervals when Hempstone was not engaged in confrontation with Moi, he seems to have been flat out fighting on this second front. There was, for example, the prolonged issue of whether the gift for Moi of a pure-bred Black Angus bull, something that Hempstone had procured from a West Virginian farmer friend, could be flown to Kenya (it was decided by State that it could not). On another occasion, and more seriously, an influential American rancher in Kenya who was a crony of Moi's characterized Hempstone to State as an alcoholic who deserved recall. His efforts failed only when the then-acting U.S. Secretary of State, Lawrence Eagleburger, declared his unreserved faith in the U.S. envoy. The book ends with a bristling attack on the alleged timidity of U.S. career appointees, best symbolized for Hempstone by the conciliatory stance of his successor in Nairobi, Aurelia Brazeal, a Clinton appointee. (Ironically, this did not save her from being briefly detained by the Kenya police in 1995, on the trumped-up charges that she intended to enter a district where, according to human rights groups, ethnic cleansing was in progress.)

ALL THIS PALES against the backdrop of the larger issues raised by Hempstone, namely those having to do with Africa's catastrophic development record. Concerning the main responsibility for this record, Hempstone has no doubt. "There is no shortage of villains", he concludes, "but the principal blame must lie with the criminally inept, corrupt and venal leadership. . . . Until Africa's Daniel arap Mois are swept onto the rubbish heap of history, there cannot be much hope for Kenya or the continent."

Since the end of the Cold War, the U.S. Agency for International Development, the National Endowment for Democracy, the UN Development Program, the World Bank, the European Union, and a host of private foundations have spent millions of dollars on newfangled programs for democratic elections and "good governance" in Africa, Eastern Europe, Latin America, and elsewhere. The results are mixed at best. That is because we can only divine cures by understanding pathologies.

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If the donors and international organizations promoting democracy in the developing world had devoted half their resources to a study of how Third World dictators survive, prosper on aid money, divide and rule, get "elected", and play their foreign supporters off against each other, we might all be wiser—and the benighted peoples in these sad lands that much more hopeful of better lives ahead. At the very least the quest for democratic and effective government in these desolate places might have stood a better chance. Added to his other achievements, Hempstone's book well serves that cause. □

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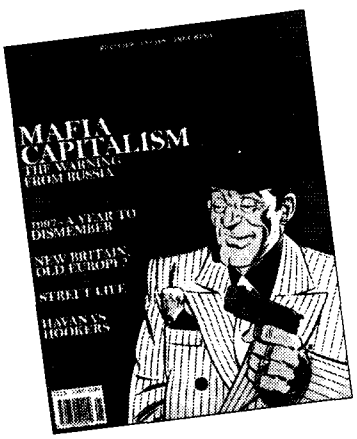

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The Dangers of Expansive Realism:

I READ YOUR article [Owen Harries, "The Dangers of Expansive Realism", Winter 1997/98] with strong approval. It was in some respects a surprise because certain of your major arguments were ones I myself had made, or had wanted to make, but had not expected to see them so well expressed by the pen of anyone else. I can perhaps make this clear by commenting specifically on certain of your points.

First, your reference to the implicit understanding that the West would not take advantage of the Russian strategic and political withdrawal from Eastern Europe is not only warranted, but could have been strengthened. It is my understanding that Gorbachev on more than one occasion was given to understand, in informal talks with senior American and other Western personalities, that if the USSR would accept a united Germany remaining in NATO, the jurisdiction of that alliance would not be moved further eastward. We did not, I am sure, intend to trick the Russians; but the actual determinants of our later behavior—lack of coordination of political with military policy, and the amateurism of later White House diplomacy—would scarcely have been more creditable on our part than a real intention to deceive.

Secondly, I could not associate myself more strongly with what you write about the realist case that sees Russia as an inherently and incorrigibly expansionist country, and suggests that this tendency marks the present Russian regime no less than it did the Russian regimes of the past. We have seen this view reflected time and again, occasionally in even more violent forms, in efforts to justify the recent expansion of NATO's boundaries and further possible expansions of that nature. So numerous and extensive have the distortions and misunderstandings on which this view is based been that it would be hard even to list them in a letter of this sort. It grossly oversimplifies and misconstrues much of the history of Russian diplomacy of the czarist period. It ignores the whole great complexity of Russia's part in World War II. It allows and encourages one to forget that the Soviet military advances into Western Europe during the last war took place with our enthusiastic approval, and the political ones of the ensuing period at least with our initial consent and support. It usually avoids mention of the Communist period, and attributes to "the Russians" generally all the excesses of the Soviet domination of Eastern Europe in the Cold War period.

Worst of all, it tends to equate, at least by implication, the Russian-Communist dictatorship of recent memory with the present Russian republic—a republic, the product of an amazingly bloodless revolution, which has, for all its many faults, succeeded in carrying on for several years with an elected government, a largely free press and media, without concentration camps or executions, and with a minimum of police brutality. This curious present Russia, we are asked to believe, is obsessed by the same dreams of conquest and oppression of others as were the worst examples, real or imaginative, of its predecessors.

You, I think, were among the first, if not indeed the first, to bring some of the above to the attention of your readers; and this, in my opinion, was an important and valuable service.

George F. Kennan
Princeton, New Jersey

IN THE LAST ISSUE of *The National Interest*, Owen Harries opposed the enlargement of NATO to include Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, partly because there was an "implicit" understanding, "explicit according to some", with the USSR

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that no such step would be taken. Mr. Harries also imputed to the advocates of such an enlargement morbid Russophobia; the naive ambition to make Europe "whole", which could not be done without including Russia; insouciance about intruding in a traditional Russian sphere of influence; a reckless accumulation of unsustainable military obligation; and a jumble of other conflicting motives.

This issue has been the subject of so much cant and emotionalism that it has become cluttered with a great deal of secondary argument, much of which Mr. Harries had the good taste not to inflict on us (though Polish-American voters, empire-building NATO bureaucrats, and a potential Sino-Russian pact of the aggrieved did raise their furry heads in his piece). Instead of presuming about motives or dwelling on the admittedly clumsy progress of Alliance decision-making, let us apply the normal criteria. These are: Would such an enlargement be in the Alliance's and especially the U.S. interest, and is there a governing moral duty in favor of the applicant states or a moral or strategic duty in favor of the Russians and against the applicant states?

Contrary to Mr. Harries' claims, there is no evidence of any "bargain" that the Western Alliance would not expand if the Warsaw Pact dissolved. Any such bargain would be supported by some evidence and would have been much more strenuously alleged by Moscow. After the proverbial decent interval it is no business of Russia's, let alone a matter subject to Russian veto, what defensive alliances are joined by historic peoples and sovereign states that are no longer Russia's neighbors. It is not necessary to quote Mackinder (as Mr. Harries does) to realize that the addition of sixty million Poles, Czechs, and Hungarians will, after a brief transition period, add a great deal of strategic strength to the Alliance, however its role may be redefined.

Mr. Harries claims that the Alliance would add a greater strategic liability than accretion of force by assuming the obligation to defend these countries. He cites the West's inability from 1938 to the end of the Cold War to defend them against the Germans and then the Russians. The United States was not a guarantor of these countries between the world wars and Germany was not a democratic ally of the West. The precedents Mr. Harries invokes only become relevant, if at all, if the United States ceases to be engaged in Europe and the Alliance in which membership is sought effectively dissolves through U.S. withdrawal.

It is a notorious fact that there is no precedent for a war-free Europe without U.S. involvement in that continent. The second half of this century has been so much less tragic than the first half because the United States has been engaged in Europe and the Far East since 1940, and has not forgotten President Roosevelt's admonition in 1941 always to be "wary of those who with sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal preach the 'ism of appeasement." This is no time for either the engagement or the wariness to cease.

As long as the American Congress and public are prepared to extend the NATO "attack upon one is an attack upon all" rule to these countries, the deterrent will be credible and the Alliance stronger. Mr. Harries helpfully invites anyone who doesn't realize Russia is in Europe to "consult an atlas." He may wish to brush up his European history to emancipate himself from the notion that these countries are historically in the Russian sphere of influence. Prior to 1945, Poland, Hungary, and the Czechs were, happily or otherwise, much more influenced by the regimes in Berlin or Vienna than by the Russians. These countries are of the West and must be fully restored to the West, not as vassal states but as full-fledged members of the American-led Western Alliance, not left like tethered cattle to await the reassertion of Russian influence which only under Stalin was extended over them.

All three states were constituted in their modern form by the Western allies, particularly President Wilson, in 1919. Captain de Gaulle helped defend the Poles from the

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Russian Bolsheviks in 1920. Britain, France, and Canada went to war to defend the Poles from the Germans in 1939. Churchill and Roosevelt wrung from Stalin a promise of free elections for the Poles at Yalta. Nine consecutive American presidents held out the prospect of the reintegration into the West of these nationalities, including Gerald Ford in a comment on Poland in the candidates' debate, which may have cost him the 1976 election.

It is another notorious fact that Germany has never been sure whether it is an eastern or western facing country. One of the dividends of our Cold War victory must be the entrenchment in the West of Germany, possibly the world's third most important country. It would be unnecessarily careless if the eastern border of the Western world were a German border, forty miles from Berlin.

Everything reasonable should be done to encourage Russia to evolve benignly and it must be treated respectfully as the enduring great power that it is. It might be impetuous and even provocative to bring into the Western Alliance countries formerly in the USSR. The former Soviet republics should work out their own arrangements, as long as Russia does not resort to military force in its relations with them, and the United States should not be expected to consider an attack on Belarus or Moldova as equivalent to an attack on New York or California. Of the Balkan countries, Slovenia is the only somewhat plausible NATO candidate now or for some time to come.

Despite a great deal of flim-flam there is probably some value in the "Partnership for Peace." I don't believe that the consultative status granted the former Soviet republics would hobble NATO in the event of a real crisis, and the G-7 countries are right to include the Russians. The adherence of the Poles, Czechs, and Hungarians to a defensive alliance which is friendly to an unbellicose Russia should not legitimately antagonize the Russians; if that country does evolve benignly, we will become ever friendlier and NATO enlargement will not be an issue. If not, we will be grateful for a strengthened alliance. In either case the balance of internal Russian development will not be tipped by this rather peripheral question.

In sum, the proposed NATO enlargement is intelligent and judicious. It strengthens the Alliance without overstretching it, honors historic commitments, and gives no just offense to the Russians. It certainly does not make Europe "whole" but it completes, in different but complementary ways, important work begun or continued by Wilson, Lloyd George, Clemenceau, Churchill, Adenauer, de Gaulle, and all of the U.S. presidents from Franklin D. Roosevelt to the present. It is an idea whose moment has been a long time coming and we should get on with it.

Conrad Black
London, England

In Our Own Image:

PROFESSOR Hendrickson ["In Our Own Image: The Sources of American Conduct in World Affairs", Winter 1997/98] would have us believe that we can build an alliance of nations on the model of the "alliance" of states built by our forebears. As he puts his case,

> If the American confrontation with the Westphalian system is not a late arriving phenomenon of the twentieth century but central to the American experiment from the beginning; if security was never 'free' but was dearly purchased by a Constitution that was 'no more than a profoundly wise agreement to differ'; and if the ideas commonly associated with twentieth-century multilateralism and internationalism are closely akin to the norms and purposes promoted by federal union—then the way is clear for redrawing the historic map of American statecraft. In this revised picture, internationalism appears not so much as a departure from historic traditions as a resumption of them, though with a different set of institutions and on a wider geographical scale.

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The validity of his conclusion, of course, depends on the validity of his propositions, each of which is, in fact, mistaken or, in the case of the last one, in need of qualification.

1. How to avoid the perils of "the Westphalian system", or how to maintain peace among the states, was important, but not "the most important factor in the American Founding." Most important was the securing of those "unalienable rights" with which all men are equally endowed. We said as much in the Constitution as well as in the Declaration of Independence.

2. The Constitution was more, not "no more", than an agreement to differ; it stated in its Preamble and embodied in its various provisions purposes common to the various states: justice, domestic tranquillity, the *common* defense, the *general* welfare, and "the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity." Differ the states did, and within limits they might, but the Framers provided (in Article VI) that the Constitution and the laws of the United States "shall be the supreme Law of the Land; and the judges in every State shall be bound thereby, any Thing in the Constitution or Laws of any State to the Contrary notwithstanding."

3. It follows that the ideas of multilateralism and internationalism are not so closely akin to the "purposes promoted by federal union" as Hendrickson seems to assume. Of course, the members of the alliance want peace and "ordered liberty", but in the absence of a common enemy they will inevitably disagree on what constitutes a threat to peace and how to respond to it, and in the absence of a common government—and Hendrickson says a "common government is neither possible nor desirable"—they will inevitably disagree on how liberty should be "ordered."

The "free world" is an alliance, and presumably, even with a "different set of institutions", will remain an alliance. But we declared our independence as "one people", and, with the possible exception of the years during the Revolutionary War and under the Articles of Confederation, this country has never been an alliance or a *foedus* of states. Since 1789 especially, we have had a "government", a government described by James Madison in Federalist No. 39 as "partly federal and partly national", but, nevertheless, a government with powers over "the people in their individual capacities." In this respect, the American Union differs decisively from the Western Alliance, and any proposal to narrow that difference will not, I think (and hope), be well received in this country; in fact, as Bertie Wooster would say, "that shot is not on the table."

Walter Berns
American Enterprise Institute

A New Axis:

DANIEL PIPES' ["A New Axis: The Emerging Turkish-Israeli Entente", Winter 1997/98] reputation as an incisive analyst of Middle Eastern affairs is richly deserved, and it is therefore no surprise that he has produced an elegant argument that the emerging Turkish-Israeli strategic relationship is of undeniable benefit to the two parties and a potentially significant stabilizing factor in the region as a whole. Nevertheless, several points in his article invite closer inspection.

Two of these relate to the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. Although Pipes rightly emphasizes the underlying general disposition and practical needs that sustain the Turkish-Israeli relationship, it was only the beginning of the Oslo process in 1993, as Pipes himself concedes, that allowed the bilateral tie to "come out of the closet." Turkish-Israeli ties can flourish in the face of a peace process that is halting, lame, or even clinically dead, but if someone ever issues a political death certificate for the process, one wonders whether the Turkish-Israeli connection would not revert to its pre-1993 condition. In the same vein, Turkey, like many other states previously indifferent or hostile to Israel, sees closer ties with Israel as a lever that can pry more favorable policies out of

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Washington. In Pipes' words, Turks "now have a well-connected ally of whom they expect a great deal." But such expectations are exaggerated in the best of circumstances, and if problems in the peace process lead to serious friction between Jerusalem and Washington, Israel will use whatever diminishing influence it has to protect its own interests; there will be little spare political capital left to exercise on behalf of Turkey—and the depth of Ankara's disappointment will be proportional to the height of its expectations.

Finally, a word about Turkish-Israeli ties as a harbinger of a "new Middle East." Pipes quotes an Israeli newspaper (approvingly, I think) to the effect that the Israeli-Turkish bond in some way vindicates Shimon Peres' optimistic vision of the region's future. This is clearly a case of the wish being father to the thought. After all, many of the dispositional and practical elements that underlie the Turkish-Israeli relationship now were also applicable to Iranian-Israeli relations before 1979—Iran and Israel also had "a common sense of otherness", they shared certain perceived threats and security concerns, and Jewish-Persian historical ties were also marked by a sense of positive mutual interaction—but the Israeli-Iranian relationship did not outlive the Islamic revolution by a single day. The point is not that Turkey may go the same direction as Iran. It almost certainly will not, for precisely the reason that Pipes cites as central to the solidity of the Turkish-Israeli relationship: Turkey has already experienced and institutionalized a secular revolution. It is rather that unless other Arab and/or Islamic countries undergo a similar transformation—and there is no indication that this will happen any time soon—the notion that Turkish-Israeli ties can serve as a template for broader regional developments seems, like so many other inspiring ideas, impossibly naive.

Mark Heller
Tel Aviv University

Pipes replies:

MARK HELLER makes three interesting observations. I somewhat disagree with the first two and concur wholeheartedly with the final one.

The nature of Turkish-Israeli relations depends on the health of the Oslo process. The 1993 agreement did make possible more open and expanded ties; does that imply its failure would cause those ties to revert to the pre-1993 limits? No, for the political climate in Turkey has changed profoundly in the interim. In the last year alone, the military engaged in a "postmodern" coup to remove an Islamist, Necmettin Erbakan, from the prime ministry; the President of the republic dramatically walked out of an Organization of the Islamic Conference meeting when his government was criticized for its relations with Israel; and the courts have shut down Refah, the Islamist party. These and other developments point to a polarization in the country and a resolve by the authorities to opt for secularism and the West. In this new context, Oslo's role seems much diminished.

Israel won't be able to deliver in Washington if it has its own problems there. True in the abstract, but Israel's clout has always been primarily in the Congress and this remains as strong as ever. To put matters in Israeli terms, the executive branch these days is Labor-oriented, the legislative is Likud-oriented. A Likud government naturally has a harder time with the former.

A "new Middle East" is emerging from the Turkish-Israeli bond. I quoted *The Jerusalem Post* with some amusement, noting that this "usually glum" publication should foresee such grand transformation. In fact, I agree with Dr. Heller that such a prospect is not in the cards until other Muslim countries also go through a secular revolution. For my part, I am pleased to see that he, a leading analyst of the Left, a man who favored a Palestinian state long before it was fashionable, acknowledges that a "new Middle East" depends not on Israeli concessions but on changes in the rest of the region.

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Albania's Cappuccino Coup:

IN HIS ANALYSIS of recent Albanian history in "Albania's Cappuccino Coup" [Winter 1997/98], Johnathan Sunley makes errors of fact and judgment about what happened in the country after 1992.

It is incorrect to say that "the story starts in May 1996." There was a highly controversial election then, one that most journalists and international observers thought was corrupt. But arguments about this single event are not the point. The central fact is that post-1992 Albania failed to establish secure democratic institutions, and that allowed the economic crisis that developed with the pyramid banking collapse of winter 1996-97 to have a devastating political effect. Why was this so?

The "international community" (actually, the United States, Britain, Germany and its neo-Habsburg bloc) saw Dr. Berisha's Albania in a purely "economistic" way, and encouraged an over-powerful presidency that was impatient of any parliamentary opposition whatsoever and stigmatized critics as "communists", even though the one-party state was dead by spring 1992.

Little or nothing was done to make the vast aid flows that Albania received—some of the highest per capita these bodies have ever disbursed—conditional on democracy. Miranda Vickers and I have tried to analyze this in our book *Albania—From Anarchy to a Balkan Identity* (New York University Press, 1997). Young diplomats and financial officials with little knowledge of the Balkans were mesmerized by Dr. Berisha. The one common denominator they all seemed to share was the CNN-inspired view that everything in Serbia was totally bad, and that as Albania was anti-Serb it must be pretty good.

Mr. Sunley is certainly right in suggesting the Albanian events may have wider significance, and the way the 1997 uprising has been "swept under the carpet" in some foreign ministries, such as Rome, is disturbing. I think the reason for this is that any sensible analysis of events involves trying to understand the role of organized crime in Albania—and in Italy, at least, that is holding up the mirror a little too close to nature for comfort.

The arguments over Dr. Berisha and Albania have been seen in some quarters as a classical Left-Right confrontation, of free marketeers versus those nostalgic for communism, and so on. Noel Malcolm, Norman Stone, and their Oxford hangers-on have reinforced this perception. This is quite wrong, and it is a pity Mr. Sunley shares some of their obsolete rhetoric about red plots and media fellow-travelers. The real division is between those who believe Albanian democracy matters, as Mr. Sunley and I do, and those who do not.

Over the last five years the really culpable parties are those in the Clinton administration and similar governments who have made foreign policy irresponsibly and abandoned responsibility for democracy to the IMF, and hope to manipulate smaller countries like puppets as a result. Albania, 1997. Now Asia, the chickens come home to roost. Where next?

James Pettifer
Institute of Balkan Studies, Thessaloniki

Sunley replies:

HAD THE international community really looked the other way in Albania as Sali Berisha went about establishing some kind of dictatorship after 1992 (as James Pettifer contends), wouldn't he still be president of the country today?

Far from being "impatient of any parliamentary opposition whatsoever", Berisha in fact played by the rules to the extent of conceding defeat in a vital referendum held in late 1994—not something Balkan leaders are famous for. He also put his own job on the line—again, not a very dictatorial trait—by adding to last year's elections a referendum on restoring the monarchy.

Berisha's real problem was that the 1995 Dayton Accord gave the appearance of stabilizing the region, thereby rendering Albania

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less strategically important and freeing the ad hoc alliance of pro-Greek lobbyists, liberal do-gooders, and bossy internationalists (which had previously been merely an irritant) to devote its full attention to unseating him. Thanks not to any Asian-style economic collapse, but to an armed insurrection followed by a farcical "election" (in which Berisha's party was denied access to one-third of the country), this has now been accomplished.

Since then, the international community has indeed fallen strangely silent, as those that were responsible for the one-party state Mr. Pettifer claims "was dead by spring 1992" have done their utmost to exhume it. Thus, 400 members of the judiciary have had their qualifications revoked by parliament, 8,000 public sector employees have been dismissed, and 450 members of the communist-era secret police have returned to work in almost their old capacity. A journalist from one newspaper sympathetic to the opposition was shot at from a car, while the transmitter of a private TV station has been destroyed. Over 800 people have been killed in violence of one kind or another since the Socialist Party took office. What is especially eerie about many of these political attacks is the way they are trailed by denunciations in pro-Socialist papers. As under communism, critics of the government are regularly accused of being on the brink of staging a coup, even though the only way opponents of the regime have been able to draw attention to its abuses is through hunger strikes.

Not that this has made much impression on bodies like the Council of Europe and OSCE, which are supposed to uphold human rights standards. (Indeed, on a visit to Tirana in January, a delegation of the latter refused to visit two judges into their third week of hunger strike and summoned the seriously weakened men to their well-appointed hotel instead.) As a result, Albania is sliding back into a black hole of penury and oppression, one that may lack the ruthless ideological overlay of the communist era, but is not missing many of its miseries. □

Johnathan Sunley
Budapest, Hungary

Deep Thoughts

This Administration opposes any effort in the Senate to mandate a pause in the process of NATO enlargement. . . . Some critics have said NATO enlargement would draw a destabilizing dividing line in Europe. A larger NATO with an open door will not. One round of enlargement with a mandated pause would.

—Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, *New York Times*, February 9, 1998

If we have to use force, it is because we are America. We are the indispensable nation. We stand tall. We see further into the future.

—Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, *New York Times*, February 22, 1998

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Reflections of a Repentant Sinner

Robert W. Tucker

SOMETIME DURING the spring of this year, the Senate will approve the Clinton administration's policy of enlarging NATO, initially through the accession of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic. It is expected to do so by a large majority after what is likely to be a lackluster debate in which the principal issue will concern the financial cost of expansion to the United States. As one who has supported limited NATO expansion from the beginning, I now believe that an initially good case has been turned into a policy that is pregnant with disaster.

A significant departure in the nation's foreign policy is about to be endorsed by the Congress. Opinion surveys report that the policy of NATO enlargement enjoys public support. They also indicate, however, that this support is based on a striking ignorance. A public whose inward focus is perhaps greater than at anytime since the 1930s is apparently unable even to identify the potential new members. For this condition, the administration is surely in large part responsible. It has made little effort to explain its policy, let alone to acknowledge candidly its possible costs and risks. In the absence of such effort, particularly on the part of the President, there is nothing that resembles the kind of broad consensus necessary to sustain a policy that presages a marked extension of American interest and power, and that may one day exact a considerable price.

The administration has made clear that Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic represent only the first round of NATO expansion. Further rounds are to follow, and while the extent of the future NATO has never been specified, the logic of the administration's policy—with its goal of an undivided and democratic Europe—points to the eventual inclusion of virtually all states situated between the old NATO and the present western border of Russia. The open-ended character of American policy was confirmed in January of this year when the government signed a formal agreement pledging Washington's support for the efforts of the three Baltic states to become members of NATO. While the so-called Charter of Partnership does not—and could not—promise membership to these states, it nevertheless constitutes an understanding that, in the words of the *New York Times*' Steven Erlanger, "future American administrations will find difficult to dilute." With the exception of Ukraine, Russia has shown the greatest sensitivity over the prospect of the Baltic states one day becoming members of NATO. Taking note of this, the Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott recently declared: "Quite bluntly, Russians need to get over their neuralgia on this subject."

Although the Senate is not expected to enter any reservations in approving this administration's policy of seeking accession to membership in NATO of the Visegrad states, it

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is at liberty to do so. There is nothing to prevent it from voicing its disapproval of further rounds or, at the least, from putting the executive on notice that approval of the first round is not to be construed as foreshadowing approval of further rounds. It should do so. The administration should be resisted in its efforts to foreclose the future of a policy on which there is as yet so little public understanding, let alone anything approaching a settled consensus. Beyond the Visegrad states, the promissory notes the administration has made out should be discounted. Such action will admittedly mean some loss of American prestige. But as Owen Harries has remarked in these pages, "prestige is not everything. When the alternative is to persist in serious error it may be necessary to sacrifice some prestige early, rather than much more later."

Why exempt even the first round from these strictures, other than the reason that its approval is by now all but determined? In some measure, the answer must be that here our commitment has gone the furthest and withdrawal would be the most damaging. In greater measure, though, the answer, I still believe, is that here a persuasive rationale does exist for expansion, though it is not the rationale of the Clinton administration. At least this is the case with respect to Poland, the centerpiece of the first round. It is admittedly less applicable to the Czech Republic and hardly applicable at all to Hungary.

The participants in the NATO debate have regularly shared the assumption that the essential and simple choice for NATO is to expand or not to expand. But there has always been a second choice: between those who talk in terms of a limited and clearly defined expansion and those who conceive it as an open-ended process. One's conception of the nature of expansion necessarily follows from the purpose for which it is presumably undertaken. If the administration's policy of expansion is open ended, it is because the purpose of expansion—an undivided and democratic Europe—sets no clear limits. Does it include Ukraine? Administration officials have indicated that it may well do so. Indeed, they have left open the possibility that it may one day include Russia itself.

By contrast, a policy of expansion may be strictly limited. Clearly, it will be if it is governed by, and responsive to, the purpose of consolidating that community of states whose security and well being have formed the principal interest of the United States since the Second World War. On this basis, the justification for including Poland in NATO (and, though in lesser measure, the Czech Republic) is apparent. Were Germany's eastern border to remain the eastern border of NATO, the most powerful European member of the Western Alliance might in time become the most insecure member as well. Unprotected by the Alliance on its eastern border, Germany might one day seek to provide for its security by independent efforts. A Poland that stands outside NATO might in these circumstances once again become the contested ground between Germany and Russia. It was roughly these considerations that led Helmut Kohl soon after reunification to voice concern over the prospect of a security vacuum on his eastern frontier.

The case for supporting limited NATO expansion on these grounds once seemed and still seems to me quite persuasive. Admittedly, it rests heavily on the assumption that the past will continue to have relevance for—to have relevance for, let it be emphasized, not to foreshadow—the future. Many believe that this assumption is misplaced and perhaps they will be proven right. Still, if there is but a modest prospect that the future will bear some resemblance to the past, a policy of limited expansion seems only prudent provided that its costs are not exorbitant.

The principal objection to NATO expansion of any kind is, of course, that the costs *will* be exorbitant, both in terms of the financial burden imposed and, more importantly, the consequences expansion will have on Russia's political development and its future relations with the Western states. But the costs of expansion must be expected to vary markedly, depending upon the extent of the expansion.

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There is no merit in the argument, though one often hears it on both sides in the debate, that expansion is expansion and that it will make little difference in the end to Moscow where NATO expansion finds its ultimate limits. Instead, Russian opposition to a clearly limited expansion, it seems only reasonable to assume, will differ from its opposition to an expansion that is open-ended and that promises, as does the administration's policy, to leave Moscow hanging in uncertainty for a considerable period. To be sure, some Russian opposition to NATO expansion, however limited, must be considered inevitable. But a policy of strictly limited expansion would at least draw the issue of NATO security in the post-Cold War world in moderate terms. Thus drawn, the prospect of striking a satisfactory balance between the security requirements of NATO and Russia's traditional interests in eastern Europe, a balance that eventually enjoyed legitimacy on both sides, would be enhanced.

The Clinton administration seems never to have seriously considered a strategy of limited expansion. Although reluctant to take up the issue of NATO expansion at all in the beginning, once it did the decision was apparently made to pursue an open-ended policy. In supporting this policy at the outset, I did so in the quite mistaken conviction that it was something other than what it professed to be. For the record shows that despite some early ambiguity, the design that is apparent today was also more or less apparent then. If that design is now clearer, it is because what are still only initial measures of implementation have nevertheless brought a greater measure of clarity. The Charter of Partnership concluded with the Baltic states is one such measure that must remove residual doubts about administration intentions.

The question persists why this administration seems determined to pursue a policy that on the face of it is at odds with its general disinclination to take on costly and onerous commitments (a disinclination that is not refuted by its present commitment in Bosnia). That the public has no real understanding of the risks and costs NATO's open-ended expansion might eventually entail, and would not give its support if it did understand, there is every reason to believe. But the same can scarcely be said of those charged with the formulation and conduct of foreign policy. Or so it would seem. Yet how to explain a policy of expansion subordinated to the grandiose end of building "an undivided, peaceful and democratic Europe", thereby doing, in Madeleine Albright's words, "for Europe's East what NATO did 50 years ago for Europe's West"?

The prevailing explanation—certainly among NATO skeptics—is simply that administration policy has been a response to a growing fear that without a new and grand purpose NATO would now become irrelevant, and that with its irrelevance America's primary means for exercising influence in Europe would be lost. In this light, Bosnia's significance is that it drove home this point, thus finally prompting American intervention there. But even if one accepts this explanation, it still does not satisfactorily account for a policy that must incur considerable costs and risks. It may be that the administration does not recognize the risks, that its policy is based on the assumption that a fully democratic Russia will emerge in the years ahead, a Russia that no longer entertains traditional interests and aspirations and that no longer minds if an expanded NATO reaches to its border. Conversely, it may be that the administration does fully recognize the risks but is nevertheless prepared to run them in order to achieve its ends. Neither conjecture, however, seems very plausible. While the first bespeaks an almost willful disregard of experience and the lessons it teaches, the second suggests an aggressiveness and risk-taking propensity that are quite alien to the administration's spirit and outlook in foreign policy.

Perhaps the most satisfactory explanation, particularly for an administration whose President has seldom seemed very serious about foreign policy, is simply one of inadvertence. Persuaded that NATO had to be given a new purpose, and that this purpose

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had to transcend the framework of the old NATO, the administration committed itself to a course that must increasingly force it to choose between risks it has little inclination to run and transforming an Alliance whose open-ended expansion requires it to take these risks. The signs increase that the choice will be the transformation of NATO from a military alliance to a "cooperative security" (read: collective security) arrangement. Those like Henry Kissinger who now decry this prospect, yet who pushed for what seemed to be open-ended expansion, may soon have more reason for repentance than this sinner. □

A Pole Apart from Zbig

I have a far better opinion of his regime than all my Russian friends. My Russian friends compare the Yeltsin regime to an ideal of democracy which has never been found even in the United States. I, on the other hand, compare the Yeltsin regime to every known historical regime that Russia has had. One of my Moscow friends says that when he hears Yeltsin speaking he imagines that this is Pugachov in the Kremlin after a successful peasant uprising. I regard the reactions of my Russian friends as excessively hysterical. After all, this is the first time in its thousand-year history that Russia has had six years of freedom. It's never happened before. The whole history of freedom that Russia had known hitherto was between February and October in 1917. Of course it is true that in Russia there are corruption, nepotism, criminal mafias. That's all there. But there are also newspapers which write about it all, there are meetings where it is possible to speak about it. Put briefly, there is a realistic positive scenario available for Russia.

—Adam Michnik, interviewed in *Quadrant* (January/February 1998)

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